

Westphal returns home to beat Wisconsin

Written by Morgan Hawk

Tuesday, 30 June 2015 16:30 - Last Updated Tuesday, 30 June 2015 16:40



GRAND CHUTE, Wis. - Luke Westphal earned a win for the Cedar Rapids Kernels in front of family members and many friends Tuesday afternoon before 2,884 fans at Fox Cities Stadium in Grand Chute, Wis.

The southpaw, along with Randy LeBlanc and Cam Booser, held the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers to just two hits as the Kernels won, 3-2, for their second consecutive win.

Westphal grew up in Clintonville, Wis. and attended college at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, both 45 minutes or less from the site of Tuesday's game.

The lefty went five innings and allowed just one hit and one run while striking out five and walking two. He was signed by the Twins earlier this year and the 26-year-old is in his first season of affiliated baseball.

LeBlanc went three scoreless innings and allowed one hit while striking out two and walking none for his fourth hold. Booser earned his eighth save by pitching the ninth inning, allowing one run on no hits with one walk and no strikeouts.

Offensively, Brian Navarreto led the way with three hits and one RBI. Zack Larson added two hits and one RBI. Rafael Valera drew three walks.

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The Kernels took an early 1-0 lead in the first inning. Tanner English led off the game by pulling a double into the left-field corner. He scored on Larson's RBI single to center field.

Wisconsin quickly tied the game 1-1 in their half of the first inning without the use of a hit. Brandon Diaz drew a leadoff walk, stole second base, reached third on a sacrifice bunt and scored on Elvis Rubio's RBI groundout.

The game did not stay tied for long as the Kernels pushed a run across in the second inning to take a 2-1 lead. T.J. White reached on a bunt single with two outs and advanced to second on a throwing error by third baseman Sthervin Matos. Navarro brought in White with an RBI single to center, putting the Kernels back in front.

Cedar Rapids extended its lead to 3-1 in the seventh inning. Nick Gordon doubled down the left-field line with one out and moved to third on Larson's single to right. Gordon came home on Alex Real's sacrifice fly to left.

The Timber Rattlers scored their second run in the ninth inning, again without the use of a hit. Mitch Meyer was hit by a pitch and Diaz walked. After a sacrifice bunt and an RBI groundout by Rubio, Wisconsin trailed 3-2 with the tying run at third base. However, Booser closed the game by getting Dustin DeMuth to foul out to third on a 3-0 pitch for the final out.

David Burkhalter started for the Timber Rattlers and lasted four innings. He allowed two runs (one earned) on four hits, striking out five and walking one.

Kodi Medeiros went two innings in relief, allowing one hit while walking three and striking out one. Zach Cooper pitched two innings and allowed one run on three hits. Luke Curtis allowed no runs and no hits

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in one inning.

The series at Wisconsin concludes at 7:05 p.m. Wednesday. Felix Jorge (3-3, 2.37) will start for the Kernels.

KERNELS (3): English, cf, 5 1 1 0, Gordon, ss, 4 1 1 0, Larson, lf, 5 0 2 1, Real, dh, 4 0 0 1, Murphy, rf, 3 0 0 0, Fernandez, 1b, 4 0 0 0, White, 3b, 4 1 1 0, Navarroto, c, 4 0 3 1, Valera, 2b, 1 0 0 0. Totals 34 3 8 3.

WISCONSIN (2): Diaz, cf, 2 1 0 0, Munoz, ss, 2 0 0 0, Rubio, rf, 3 0 1 2, DeMuth, dh, 4 0 0 0, Matos, 3b, 3 0 0 0, Neuhaus, 2b, 3 0 0 0, Sharkey, 1b, 2 0 1 0, Mejia, c, 3 0 0 0, Meyer, lf, 2 1 0 0. Totals 24 2 2 2.

Kernels 110 000 100 - 3 8 0

Wisconsin 100 000 001 - 2 2 3

Westphal, LeBlanc (6), Booser (9) and Navarroto. Burkhalter, Medeiros (5), Cooper (7), Curtis (9) and Mejia. W - Westphal (1-0). L - Burkhalter. S - Booser (8). 2B - English (9), Gordon (9). SB - Murphy (5), Gordon (18), Larson (10), Diaz (17). E - Matos 2 (14), Munoz (13). T - 2:33. A - 2,884.