

Kernels keep winning with new players

Written by Jim Ecker

Wednesday, 15 July 2015 21:23 - Last Updated Thursday, 16 July 2015 06:10



You can't tell the Cedar Rapids Kernels without a scorecard with all the changes on the ballclub in the last few days, but one thing remains the same.

The Kernels keep winning.

Cedar Rapids scored four gift runs in the seventh inning Wednesday night and clipped the Burlington Bees, 5-2, before 2,234 fans at Veterans Memorial Stadium.

The Kernels raised their record to 53-37, the third-best overall mark in the Midwest League, and they've done it with 45 different players in those 90 games.

"It's been a revolving door, unfortunately," said Manager Jake Mauer.

There have been injuries, promotions, demotions and players released by the Minnesota Twins organization. The Kernels have made five roster changes this week, but it didn't bother them Wednesday.

Yorman Landa, fresh off the disabled list, struck out three batters in his one inning on the mound in relief and picked up the victory on his first day back on the job.

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Rafael Valera, the every-day third baseman now that T.J. White has been promoted to Fort Myers, went 4-for-4, drove in three runs and raised his batting average to .324.

Trevor Hilgenberger, who has been here all season, struck out three batters in 1 2/3 innings and got his 13th save.

New faces have blended with the old faces and the Kernels keep winning games.

And the revolving door will probably keep spinning for the rest of the season.

"It keeps us fresh," said Mauer. "Our lineup is going to be different, I'm sure, for Game 1 of the playoffs. It presents different challenges."

The Kernels have 50 games left in the regular season and then the playoffs, which don't begin until the second week of September. By then, 60 or 70 different players may have passed through town.

The Kernels scored four unearned runs in the seventh inning Wednesday to erase a 2-1 deficit. Burlington (42-47) made two costly errors in the inning and the Kernels took advantage with RBI singles by Nick Gordon and Edgar Corcino and a two-run single by Valera.

Gordon and Corcino had two hits. Gordon has a 14-game hitting streak, the longest by a Kernel this season.

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Kernels starter Felix Jorge, who leads the Midwest League with a 2.06 ERA among starting pitchers, allowed two runs in six innings and got a no-decision.

Cedar Rapids and Burlington meet again Thursday night at 6:35 at the stadium.

BURLINGTON (2): Arakawa, 2b, 4 0 1 1, Yacinich, ss, 4 0 1 0, Flair, 1b, 2 0 0 0, Allen, rf, 2 1 1 1, Houchins, 3b, 4 0 0 0, Wass, c, 4 0 0 0, Mateo, dh, 3 1 1 0, Gretzky, lf, 3 0 0 0, Hermosillo, cf, 2 0 0 0. Totals 28 2 4 2.

KERNELS (5): English, cf, 4 1 1 0, Gordon, ss, 4 1 2 1, Corcino, rf 4 2 2 1, Murphy, lf, 3 0 1 0, Valera, 3b, 4 0 4 3, Kuresa, 1b, 4 0 0 0, Navarreto, c, 4 0 0 0, Kelly, dh, 4 1 0 0, Miller, 2b, 4 0 0 0. Totals 35 5 10 5.

Burlington ▯ ▯ 000 110 000 - 2 4 2

Kernels ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ 100 000 40x - 5 10 0

Robichaux, Klonowski (6), Kopra (7), Petersen (8) and Wass. Jorge, Landa (7), Theofanopoulos (8), Hildenberger (8) and Navarreto. W - Landa (1-0).

L - Klonowski (1-5). S - Hildenberger (13). 2B - Arakawa. HR - Allen. SB - Gordon (22), Corcino (7), English (28). E - Wass (13). T - 2:29. A - 2,234.