Kernels stumble against Snappers, 13-7

Written by S.D. Buhr
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Baseball is a challenging game at any professional level, but it gets much tougher when you give up five unearned runs in the first inning before
anyone on your team gets their hands on a bat.

That was the hole the Cedar Rapids Kernels dug themselves into Friday night as the Beloit Snappers struck for a five-spot in the opening stanza
en route to a 13-7 thumping of the Kernels in
front of 3,347 fans on "Minions Night" at Veterans Memorial Stadium.

Cedar Rapids starting pitcher Randy Rosario retired the first two Beloit batters in the first inning and looked to be on his way to a
routine 1-2-3 inning when he coaxed a ground ball off the bat of Snappers
shortstop Yairo Munoz. Third baseman Rafael Valera's throw to first base
was well off the mark, however, allowing Munoz to reach safely.

Rosario never recorded another out. The next six batters reached base off the left-hander before he was lifted.

"That was embarrassing, absolutely brutal," Manager Jake Mauer lamented afterward. "We had a hard time recovering from that error and it all
happened with two outs.

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"That's a tall task to ask your bullpen to get 8 and 1/3 (innings). Randy really didn't give us too much, which was very
disappointing."

If it had been just those five first-inning runs the Kernels had to make up, the night would have had a happier ending. But after Cedar Rapids tied
the game 5-5 in the fourth inning, Beloit kept right on scoring runs.

Randy LeBlanc (6-3) relieved Rosario and shut down the Snappers for 3 and 1/3 innings, but gave up a two-run home run in the fifth.

Cedar Rapids sent all nine batters to the plate in its five-run fourth inning on singles from Valera, Zack Larson and Sean Miller, an RBI double
from Tyler Kuresa and a two-RBI triple by Tanner English.

Beloit quickly broke that tie, touching reliever Cam Booser for a pair of runs in the fifth inning and another in the sixth to pull ahead 8-5.

Brian Navarreto closed the gap to 8-6 in the sixth with a solo home run high off the left field foul pole, but the Snappers immediately struck
back with their second five-run inning of the night in the seventh,
stretching their lead to 13-6 and putting the game out of reach.

The Kernels added their final run in the ninth.

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