

English goes 5-for-5 as Kernels roll

Written by S.D. Buhr

Tuesday, 04 August 2015 22:03 - Last Updated Tuesday, 04 August 2015 22:14



Tanner English entered Tuesday's game with the Dayton Dragons having reached base in 14 consecutive games for the Cedar Rapids Kernels. The Kernels' leadoff batter wasted no time making it 15 straight and proceeded to enjoy a special game.

English led off the home half of the first inning with a double to right-center field and went 5-for-5 in an 8-1 victory over Dayton before 2,807 fans at Veterans Memorial Stadium.

English became the first Kernel to collect five hits in a ballgame since Byron Buxton went 5-for-6 against Quad Cities on June 5, 2013. He also became the first Kernel to collect three doubles in one game this season.

English drove in three runs, scored twice and collected his 34th stolen base.

English used the entire field Tuesday, spreading his five hits across the outfield.

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"I did," he noted. "That kid (Dragons starting pitcher Tejay Antone) was throwing pretty good. His ball was moving a lot. With guys like that, you just kind of have to make contact. I was really just trying to get the ball on the barrel."

English, 22, raised his batting average from .248 to .259 with his performance in the leadoff spot in the order. He was selected in the 11th round of the 2014 draft by Minnesota from the University of South Carolina.

English barely missed the Midwest League records for most hits in a game (6) and most doubles in a game (4). He also stole his 34th base.

Shortstop Nick Gordon, the No. 2 hitter in the Kernels lineup, added three singles in a 15-hit attack as the two hitters at the top of the lineup went 8-for-9.



"That's pretty good production," Kernels manager Jake Mauer observed. "Those two guys picked us up. If we can get those two guys on, they can do a lot of different things with their speed, stealing bases and running around out there."

After the Dragons started the night's scoring with a run in the third inning, the Kernels knotted the game in their half of the third and plated three more runs in the fourth for a 4-1 lead. Cedar Rapids topped off the scoring by sending all nine batters to the plate in the seventh inning for four more runs and an 8-1 bulge.

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Cedar Rapids starting pitcher Keaten Steele (3-3) made the lead stand up with seven innings of five-hit work on the mound. Luke Bard added two shutout innings of relief work. Steele and Bard combined to retire 12 straight Dayton batters at one point.

Steele was quick to credit his defense.

“I was just trying to keep the ball down and let the defense play,” he said. “They did a great job tonight. You just can’t walk anybody. When you walk them, you give them opportunities to score and most people take advantage of that.”

Steele did not give up any free passes to the Dragons and struck out three batters.

“He was really good,” Mauer said. “He took advantage of their aggressiveness, really. He got a lot of outs early in the count, which was good.”

Mauer also gave credit to pitching coach Henry Bonilla, who had the task of preparing Steele and the rest of the Kernels’ pitching staff to face Dayton for the first time this season. The Kernels face each team in the Midwest League’s Eastern Division just one series each year.

“Henry had a pretty good game plan, not knowing these guys, with the information we did have,” the skipper said.

The Kernels (63-45) and Dayton (56-52) meet again at 6:35 p.m. Wednesday at Perfect Game Field.

DAYTON (1): Pickens, lf, 4 0 0 0, Thompson, 2b, 4 0 3 1, LaValley, 3b, 4 0 1 0, Aquino, rf, 4 0 0

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0, Crook, cf, 4 0 0 0, Aldazoro, dh, 4 0 1 0,
Boulware, c, 4 0 0 0, Rachael, 1b, 2 1 1 0, Gonzalez, ss, 3 0 0 0. Totals
33 1 6 1.

KERNELS (8): English, cf, 5 2 5 3, Gordon, ss, 4 0 3 1, Corcino, rf, 5 0 0 1, Doe, dh, 5 0 1 1,
Kuresa, 1b, 3 1 1 0, White, 3b, 5 1 1 0, Navarreto,
c, 3 1 2 0, Diemer, lf, 3 2 1 1, Kelly, 2b, 4 1 1 0. Totals 37 8 15 7.

Dayton 001 000 000 - 1 6 0

Kernels 001 300 40x - 8 15 0

Antone, Moody (7), Ehret (7) and Boulware. Steele, Bard (8) and Navarreto. W - Steele (3-3). L
- Antone (5-9). 2B - Rachal (13), English 3 (19),
Navarreto (10). SB - English. T - 2:20. A - 2,807.