

## Kernels gaining momentum for playoffs

Written by Jim Ecker

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Jake Mauer has a young family waiting for him in Minnesota, but the Midwest League playoffs start Wednesday and the Kernels skipper hopes to stay with his baseball "family" in Cedar Rapids for as long as possible and take a shot at the title.

"To me it's whether I get home in a week or two weeks or three weeks. It doesn't really matter," said Mauer, who has been in Cedar Rapids since early April.

The Kernels clipped Clinton, 3-1, Sunday before 3,065 fans at Veterans Memorial Stadium for their third straight victory to gain a little momentum for the playoffs.

The Kernels will host Clinton in the final game of the regular season Monday at noon, then they'll host Quad Cities in the first game of the best-of-3 playoffs Wednesday night.

Cedar Rapids struggled in August with a 12-16 record for the month, including a four-game losing streak from Aug. 14-18 and a five-game skid from Aug. 25-29, but Mauer thinks his club has found its legs again heading into the postseason tournament.

"That's what you hope, that you start playing better," he said. "We weren't too good two weeks ago. We had a tough stretch. For 10 in a row, we were bad.

"But the boys kept plugging. And hopefully we'll have a good showing tomorrow and keep that momentum carrying through."

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