

Williams Blasts 'Dads To Walk-Off Win

Written by Staff Reports
Tuesday, 09 April 2013 07:34

The Hickory Crawdads were down to their final out Monday night, on the verge of yet another blown game on the early season, before left fielder Nick Williams launched a walk-off, two-run homer over the left field wall to salvage a 5-4 win for the 'Dads over the Greenville Drive at LP Frans Stadium.

The Crawdads entered the 9th inning with a 3-2 lead thanks to a Drive error in the eighth that gave Hickory its first lead of the game. Closer Josh McElwee entered the contest looking for his second straight save, but promptly allowed a game-tying solo home run to Greenville DH David Chester to knot the score at 3-3. The Drive would also pick up the go-ahead run in the frame on a 2-out RBI double by shortstop Mike Miller.

Suddenly trailing, the 'Dads stayed alive with a one-out single from shortstop Luis Marte before Lewis Brinson struck out to bring up Williams with two away. Previously hitless in four at-bats in the game, Williams launched the first pitch he saw over the left-center field wall for the 5-4 win. The homer was Williams' league leading third long ball of the year and pushed his RBI total to six through the first five games of the season. The home run was actually the third of the game for the Crawdads, pushing their league leading total to seven. Second baseman Ryan Rua (1-3, HR) and third baseman Joey Gallo (3-4, HR, 2B) also went yard in the victory. The game started ominously for the 'Dads with starting pitcher Eric Brooks struggling to find his command. Brooks allowed two first inning runs to the Drive, but was able to skirt further damage despite walking three batters and allowing multiple base runners in each of the first three innings.

Brooks exited the contest after four dangerous frames with Hickory still trailing 2-0. Starting in the fifth, however, the threatening Greenville offense disappeared as Crawdads reliever Alexander Claudio entered and proceeded to throw four perfect innings with six strikeouts. On the back of the dominant relief outing, the 'Dads were able to tie the game at 2-2 thanks to Rua's and Gallo's solo homers in the fifth and sixth frames respectively. Hickory finally snatched their first lead in the eighth, when Drive third baseman Nick Moore allowed Preston Beck's wind-aided, infield pop-up to drop and Gallo to score.

The bottom of the ninth comeback actually made a winner out of McElwee (1-0) despite blowing the save and allowing two runs in his one inning of work. Drive reliever Yunior Ortega (0-1) picked up the loss with a total of three runs allowed over his three innings pitched.

With the win the Crawdads (2-3) take the first game of their 3-game series with the Drive (2-3). The two clubs will face off again Tuesday night at 6:00 pm.

NOTES: Tuesday, April 9th is a special edition Thirsty Tuesday at LP Frans Stadium. All Pepsi products and 12 oz beers are just \$1....Individual Tickets for all Crawdads home games are available right now at Hickorycrawdads.com or by calling (828) 322-3000! Group outings, corporate partnerships, Buffalo Wild Wings Claw Club memberships and Ticket Books are also available right now by calling the Front Office at (828) 322-3000.