

Crawdads Take Two From Legends

Written by Staff Reports
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The Hickory Crawdads, 1st-Half Northern Division Champions, won both seven-inning games in Saturday's doubleheader against the Lexington Legends, before 3,003 fans at L.P. Frans Stadium. Hickory prevailed in game one, 6-2, which was completed after being suspended in the bottom of the third inning on Friday night due to rain, before cruising to the 6-1 win in game two on Saturday.

In game one, the Crawdads and the Legends resumed Friday's suspended game with Hickory owning a 2-0 lead. The Crawdads had runners at second and third and nobody out in the bottom of the third inning.

Hickory (50-34, 10-6) wasted no time regaining the offensive momentum against reliever Gabriel Garcia, who was on the mound for Lexington. Christian Villanueva got things started with a sacrifice fly, scoring Teodoro Martinez from third to make it 3-0. Yefry Castillo, who entered as a pinch runner at second base, moved to third on a base hit by Tomas Telis. Both runners moved up 90-feet on a passed ball charged to catcher Ben Heath that scored Castillo and stretching the lead to 4-0.

Josh Richmond followed with a single, before Alejandro Selen brought in Telis from third with an RBI fielder's choice. A walk to Andrew Clark loaded the bases for Jhonny Gomez, who drove in the final run of the inning with a sacrifice fly to right field capping off the four-run frame and giving Hickory a 6-0 lead.

Winning pitcher Nick McBride (1-1) started Saturday's suspended game in the top of the fourth. He replaced Roman Mendez, who got the start Friday night and hurled three scoreless innings before the rains came.

Lexington finally got on the board with a pair of tallies in the top of the sixth. Enrique Hernandez started the inning with a single and advanced to second on a walk by Telvin Nash. Mike Kvasnicka got the Legends (40-46, 5-11) on the board with an RBI single that scored Hernandez; Nash darted home on a double play ball, cutting Hickory's lead at 6-2.

Joe Van Meter slammed the door with a 1-2-3 top of the seventh for the Crawdads.

In game two, the Legends (40-47, 5-12) took the early lead with a run in the top of the first against winning pitcher Nick Tepesch (5-3). Jay Austin led off with a single and swiped second base. Austin took third on a sacrifice bunt and on an RBI single by Mike Kvasnicka.

From that point on, it was all Hickory. The Crawdads (51-34, 11-6) responded by scoring twice in the bottom of the third. Jake Skole started the stanza with a single and a steal, putting himself at second base with the tying run. One out later, Kellin Deglan ripped an RBI double down the right field line to score Skole and tie game at 1-1. Odubel Herrera's RBI single up the middle scored Deglan for a 2-1 advantage.

The Crawdads scored again in the bottom of the fourth. Andrew Clark walked to start the inning and eventually scored on a two-out, two-run double by Jhonny Gomez for a 3-1 lead.

Hickory put the game away with three more runs in the fifth. Teodoro Martinez doubled to start the inning and stole third base. Herrera wasted no time bringing Martinez home with a sacrifice fly to right field for the 4-1 lead. Christian Villanueva followed with a base hit and Clark emptied the bases with a two-run bomb that gave Hickory a commanding 6-1 lead.

While the offense padded the lead, Tepesch continued to keep Lexington at bay. He went the

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distance and finished strong by striking out the side in the top of the seventh for his second complete-game victory of the season.

NOTES: The Crawdads go for the series sweep in the finale against Lexington on Sunday at 5 p.m. It is 70s / Classic Rock Night, with all fans born in the 1970s receiving a Half Off Ticket to the game. Gates open at 4 p.m.