

Vasquez Emerges In 'Dads 4-2 Win

Written by Staff Reports
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Hickory Crawdads starting pitcher Kelvin Vasquez came into Thursday night's start in Greensboro desperately searching for his command and coming off a start in which he failed to escape the first inning. At least for one night everything changed however, as the young Dominican native kept the Grasshoppers at bay and led the way to a 4-2 'Dads win at NewBridge Bank Park.

The 20-year-old right-hander looked like a completely different pitcher compared to his previous 2013 performances, tossing a career high 5.2 innings and allowing just two runs on seven hits. Perhaps the most impressive stat, though, was the one walk that Vasquez surrendered less than a week after walking four in just 0.2 innings.

Grasshoppers pitcher Mason Hope was actually even better than Vasquez early on, starting his night with four perfect innings while his teammates gave him a 1-0 lead. The 'Dads finally figured out Hope in the 5th though, with right fielder Nomar Mazara launching a 2-run homer to right to give Hickory a 2-1 lead they would never relinquish.

Second baseman Ryan Rua continued the Hickory homer binge with a solo shot to left in the 6th to put the Crawdads ahead 3-1. The Grasshoppers would score on a homer of their own in the bottom of the frame to narrow the lead to 3-2, but the 'Dads finished the scoring in the 9th when DH David Lyon reached on an error and came in on Luis Marte's RBI single to make the score 4-2.

The Grasshoppers last big threat came in the seventh when they put runners on second and third with two outs. Sensing the importance of the moment, Hickory manager Corey Ragsdale brought in reigning SAL Pitcher of the Week Alexander Claudio who proceeded to strikeout Cody Keefer looking to end the frame and maintain the 'Dads lead.

Vasquez (1-1) picked up the well-deserved win for his efforts while Hope (0-2) was the hard luck loser for Greensboro. Claudio (1) earned the save for Hickory after finishing the game with 1.2 shutout innings on one hit and two strikeouts.

On the plate Mazara went 1-3 with his HR, 2 RBI and a walk while Rua finished 2-3 with his long ball and two runs scored. Marte also had a nice night with two hits and an RBI.

With the win Hickory (13-8) wins their series in Greensboro (11-10) two games to one and have now one three straight series while taking over first place in the North Division. The 'Dads will now head to Hagerstown to play the Suns for the first time in 2013. First pitch Friday night is scheduled for 6:35 pm.

NOTES: The Crawdads 7-game road trip now moves on to Hagerstown with the 'Dads and Suns matching up for a 4-game series. Game one is scheduled for 6:35 Thursday. You can follow the 'Dads through the entire trip on 1490 AM or online at hickorycrawdads.com....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.

Photo Courtesy: Kelvin Vasquez, Hickory Crawdads