

Crawdads Sweep Doubleheader

Written by Staff Reports
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The Hickory Crawdads certainly made the most of their rainy situation Monday night, as the 'Dads shrugged off their tough Saturday defeat by winning both games of their doubleheader 4-3 and 5-3 against the Savannah Sand Gnats at L.P. Frans Stadium.

All the rain on Sunday seemed to wash away the 'Dads troubles, as the club showcased good hitting and solid pitching in taking both of the twin bill contests. The rain actually stopped and the clouds parted just in time for game one. Savannah jumped out to an early lead with a first inning run off newly activated Crawdads lefty Sam Stafford, but the 'Dads answered in the second with a solo homer by Jorge Alfaro to tie the game at 1-1.

In addition to tying the game, the homer was also the 2,000th in Crawdads franchise history. Hickory would take their first lead of the game in the 4th, when Jordan Akins came through with a 2-out, 2-RBI single to center to put the Crawdads up 3-1. The 'Dads seemed well on their way to an easy 7-inning win after that, but the Sand Gnats rallied to score two runs and tie the game 3-3 off of Crawdads reliever Cody Kendall. The tying run for Savannah actually came in thanks to an error by Hickory shortstop Luis Marte.

But the game turned in Hickory's favor bottom of the eighth. The Crawdads who took advantage of an error by Gnats shortstop Phillip Evans to win the game. With two outs in the 8th, Joey Gallo blooped a double into shallow center field to put the winning run in scoring position. Ryan Rua would follow with a hard hit ball up the middle. Evans would reach the ball but drop it trying to take it from his glove. The error allowed Rua to reach and Gallo to score all the way from second to give the 'Dads their 4-3 win.

Kendall (1-0) earned the win for Hickory despite blowing the save, while Savannah reliever Jake Kuebler (0-2) took the loss.

The second game required no such heroics from the Hickory hitters, thanks to a solid performance by 'Dads starter Tyler Smith. Tossing a season-long six innings, Smith also struck out a season-high eight batters while holding Savannah to three runs on seven hits and no walks.

The Crawdads bats would back their starter early, with Lewis Brinson leading off the game with his 6th home run of the year. After Savannah scored twice in the second to go up 2-1, the 'Dads plated three runs in the bottom of the inning to re-take the lead 4-2. Joe Maloney provided the big blast in the inning with a solo home run to right, while Luis Marte drove in a run with an RBI single and later scored himself on a wild pitch.

The Sand Gnats would score one last time in the third before Smith (4-0) settled in while retiring six in-a-row to end his night and earn the win. Gallo would drive in a run in the fifth to end the scoring while Claudio Alexander struck out the side in the ninth to earn his third save of the year.

Gallo led the Crawdads bats on the night going a combined 3-7 with a double, triple, RBI and run scored. Marte also put in two solid games finishing 3-5 with an RBI and two runs scored. With the doubleheader sweep, the Crawdads (18-12) move back into a first place tie with Hagerstown in the North while Savannah (18-11) remains on top in the South despite the two losses. The two clubs will wrap up their 4-game series Tuesday morning at 11:00 am.

NOTES: Come out to L.P. Frans Tuesday morning at 11:00 am to see the 'Dads go for the series win against the Sand Gnats. Show your business card at the ticket office and receive a half-price box seat ticket....Individual Tickets for all Crawdads home games are available right now at Hickorycrawdads.com or by calling (828) 322-3000! Group outings, corporate

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partnerships, Buffalo Wild Wings Claw Club memberships and Ticket Books are also available right now by calling the Front Office at (828) 322-3000.