

'Dads Rally Falls Short In 9-8 Loss

Written by Mike Kelly

Monday, 13 May 2013 07:09

A Hickory Crawdads offense that had scuffled in the first three games from Charleston finally showed up Sunday night. In a game in which the 'Dads collected 11 hits it will be the one hit they didn't get which looms large however, as Hickory left the tying run at second base in a 9-8 loss to the RiverDogs at Riley Park.

The Crawdads entered Sunday night with only three runs and 15 hits total over the first three games of their series in Charleston. The 'Dads quickly surpassed that output in the first inning, as Ryan Rua launched a 3-run home run to left and Jordan Akins doubled in Nomar Mazara to put Hickory on top 4-0.

The lead would last until bottom of the third, when the RiverDogs erupted for seven runs on six hits to take a 7-4 lead. Crawdads starting pitcher Tyler Smith was chased from the game before completing the frame, allowing six of the seven runs on five hits. Smith exited the game with his worst outing of the year, allowing six runs on six hits, two walks and two strikeouts over just 2.2 innings pitched.

The big blast in the inning actually came against Hickory reliever Coby Cowgill, who saw his first pitch of the game blasted over the left field wall by 'Dogs first baseman Reymond Nunez for a 3-run homer to put Charleston on top 7-4.

The 'Dads would cut their deficit down to 7-5 in the fifth when Rua went yard again, this time a solo shot to left field to give him eight long balls on the season.

The score would then stagnate thanks to the solid bullpen pitching of Cowgill and Joe Burns. After allowing the homer to Nunez, Cowgill settled in to retire 7 consecutive batters before giving way to Burns. The 'Dads southpaw picked up right where his teammate left off, tossing two perfect innings to bring the number of consecutive batters retired to 13.

The bullpen dominance would end in the bottom of the eighth however, when Cody Kendall was roughed up to the tune of two runs on three hits to stretch the RiverDogs lead to 9-5.

Undaunted, the Crawdads rallied in the ninth with a walk by Luis Mendez followed one out later by a double from Nick Vickerson. First baseman Jorge Alfaro then proceeded to blast a 3-run homer over the left field wall to bring Hickory within a run at 9-8.

Rua would follow the long ball with a ground ball single up the middle. The 'Dads second baseman would later move up on a wild pitch to put the tying run on second with just one out. That's where the rally would end though, as the 'Dogs brought in reliever Phil Wetherell who proceeded to strike out Joey Gallo and induce a groundout by Mazara to end the game.

Charleston starter Evan Rutckjy (4-2) actually earned the win despite allowing five runs on six hits over his five innings pitched. Smith (4-1) took his first loss of the season while Wetherell (1) earned the save after retiring the final two batters of the game.

Rua finished with one of his best games of the year, going 3-5 with 2 home runs and four RBI. Alfaro went 1-5 with his 9th long ball of the season, while Vickerson finished 2-5 with a pair of doubles.

With the loss the Crawdads (19-16) drop three of four against the RiverDogs (18-15) and fall two games back of Hagerstown in the North Division. The 'Dads will look to get back in the win column when they return home for a 3-game series against the West Virginia Power starting Monday at 6:00 pm.

NOTES: The Crawdads come back to L.P. Frans Stadium for a brief 3-game home stand against the West Virginia Power. Monday night is Craw "MOMS" Night with all moms receiving a FREE grand stand ticket to the game! It's also BINGO Night and Senior 2-for-1 Night.

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Tuesday night is a Dollar Night where fans can buy one ticket at regular price and receive a second ticket of equal value for just \$1. Hotdogs, popcorn, Pepsi products and other concession items are also just a buck! Finally, Wednesday is a day game and another Business Persons Special with \$5 box seats available to anyone who presents a business card at the ticket office! It's also Unemployment Night where fans can show their NCESC issued debit card and receive up to four complimentary tickets.....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: Ryan Rua, Hickory Crawdads