

## Rua, Brinson Homer In Slugfest Loss

Written by Staff Reports  
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The Hickory Crawdads arrived in Rome, GA and found themselves thrown into the middle of a slugfest Thursday night. A back and forth contest that saw both teams lead by at least three runs ended with the 'Dads coming up one run short, falling 8-7 to the Braves at State Mutual Stadium.

The 'Dads fell behind early when the Braves scored twice in the first and once in the second to take a 3-0 lead off of starting pitcher Connor Sadzeck. Sadzeck would settle down after that though, holding the Braves scoreless over the next three innings.

That gave the Hickory hitters time to adjust to Rome starter Lucas Sims, who started the game with four shutout innings. Finally in the fifth, Jordan Akins led off the frame with a single and Lewis Brinson followed with his 11th home run of the year to left to cut the score to 3-2.

The 'Dads kept it going in the sixth off the Rome bullpen, scoring five more runs on five this to take their first lead of the game at 7-3. The 5-run outburst was highlighted by a 2-run, moonshot homer from Ryan Rua to left, giving him a SAL leading 14 long balls on the year.

The four run advantage would quickly be cut down by the Braves in the bottom of the sixth, as Rome scored two runs off of Sadzeck and reliever Jose Valdespina to cut the score to 7-5.

Rome completed the comeback the next inning, scoring three more runs to take an 8-7 lead. Hickory had opportunities in the 8th and 9th to tie the game, but left the tying run in scoring position in each frame to end the game with the 8-7 defeat.

Brinson finished the night 1-1 with his home run, three walks and two runs scored. David Lyon went 2-4 with an RBI, Luis Marte finished 2-4 with a double and an RBI while Jordan Akins went 2-4 with two runs scored.

Braves reliever Bryam Garcia (3-0) earned the win for his 1.1-shutout innings, while Crawdads reliever Cody Kendall took the loss after allowing two runs on three hits during his two innings pitched. Shae Simmons tied the SAL lead and improved to a perfect 14-14 in save opportunities after retiring the final five batters.

The loss drops the 'Dads to 29-23, but they remain just two games back in the SAL North Division. Rome improves to 28-13 and stays three games back in the South Division. The two teams will meet up again Friday night in game two of the four-game series at 7:00 pm.

NOTES: The Crawdads will continue their 7-game road trip with three more games in Rome through Sunday. The 'Dads will return home on Tuesday, June 4th for a 3-game series against the Lakewood Blue Claws.....Individual Tickets for all Crawdads home games are available right now at [Hickorycrawdads.com](http://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**