

Rua, 'Dads Overpower Lakewood

Written by Staff Reports
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The red hot Hickory Crawdads lineup continued their decimation of the Lakewood BlueClaws pitching staff on Thursday night, as the 'Dads launched four more home runs and scored a season-high 15 runs in a 15-4 win at L.P. Frans Stadium. The win completed the 3-game series sweep for Hickory, in which they outscored Lakewood 31-9.

One night after homering four times and beating the BlueClaws 12-4, the 'Dads one-upped themselves with 15 runs on 15 hits including four more long balls. All-Star second baseman Ryan Rua led the charge, homering twice as part of a 3-4 night with 6 RBI. It was the second multi-home run game of the year for Rua, who also took over the SAL homer lead 17 on the year.

The 'Dads wasted little time in jumping on BlueClaws starting pitcher Shane Watson, with Rua launching a 3-run bomb to left-center field to put his team ahead 3-0 in the first. The second inning saw two more Crawdads long balls, as shortstop Luis Marte lined a 3-run shot to left before left fielder Nick Williams blasted a 2-run bomb to right to put Hickory ahead 8-0.

Lakewood would get on the board with a 2-run homer by catcher Justin Dalles in the third to make the score 8-2, but the 'Dads answered right back when Rua hit his second home run of the night in the fourth. A 2-run blast, the no-doubt shot sailed over the wall in left center to give the Crawdads a 10-2 advantage.

Hickory tacked on two more runs in the fifth when Marte lined a bases loaded, 2-RBI single to center to make the score 12-2. Not letting off the gas, the 'Dads plated three more runs in the bottom of the seventh with Williams, Rua and Ronald Guzman all picking up RBIs to push the lead to 15-2.

The BlueClaws would score one last time in the eighth, when Dalles went yard for the second time with a 2-run shot to finish the scoring at 15-4. All nine Crawdads batters scored at least one run, while eight had at least one hit. Five different 'Dads finished with a multi-hit game, led by Rua (3-4, 2 HR, 6 RBI) and Marte (2-5, HR, 5 RBI).

Almost lost with all the offense was the great performance by Hickory starting pitcher Andrew Faulkner (1-0), who earned the win after going a season-long seven innings and giving up just two runs on six hits, one walk, and a season-high eight strikeouts. Watson (3-6) took the loss for the BlueClaws after allowing eight runs, seven earned, over 1.1 innings on the mound.

The win gives Hickory (33-25) a one game lead on Hagerstown and a 1.5 game advantage on West Virginia in the SAL Northern Division. Lakewood (23-35) falls 10 games back with the loss. The 'Dads will now hit the road for a stretch of 8 games in six days against the Greenville Drive and Hagerstown Suns. The road trip kicks off Friday night with a doubleheader against the Drive. First pitch of game one is scheduled for 5:00 pm.

NOTES: The Crawdads are back on the road for a stretch of 8 games in six days. The 'Dads will return home to Hickory next Thursday to wrap up the first half of the season with four games against Delmarva.....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