

Suns Sweep Crucial Doubleheader From Crawdads

Written by Jim Clark

Thursday, 13 June 2013 06:35

The Hagerstown Suns (35-28) avenged Tuesday night's doubleheader sweep at the hands of the Hickory Crawdads (37-29) by sweeping Wednesday's doubleheader by scores of 10-3 and 6-5. Game two saw Hagerstown come back from a 5-4 deficit late in the game and win in extra innings. The Suns are now only a half game back of the Crawdads with four games left before the All-Star Break.

With Hickory clinging to a 5-4 lead, Hagerstown tied the game at 5-5 in the sixth inning. With one out 3B Wilmer Difo laid down a bunt single to start the rally. Difo advanced to second on a groundout by 2B Tony Renda. Shortstop Stephen Perez then brought home Difo on a single to centerfield.

The Suns walked off with the victory in the ninth. RF Brandon Miller got hit by a pitch to begin the inning. CF Will Piwnica-Worms then laid down a sacrifice bunt to pitcher Jose Leclerc (1-4), but his throw to first went wide of the bag, allowing Miller to score all the way from first and give Hagerstown a 6-5 victory.

RHP Gilberto Mendez (1-0) got the win in relief for the Suns. Mendez pitched two innings, allowing one hit and one walk while striking out four. Leclerc suffered the loss for Hickory. Leclerc tossed one inning, allowing one unearned run on no hits and two walks.

With a -3-1 lead in game one, the Suns broke the game open with three runs in the fourth inning. With two outs Perez drew a walk, later advancing to third on a single by catcher Craig Manuel. Difo then stepped in and hit a three-run home run to right field, his second of the season.

Hagerstown added to their lead in the fifth by scoring four more runs. With runners on second and third Worms hit a double, scoring both 2B Khayyan Norfolk and 1B Shawn Pleffner. Another double, this time by LF Estarlin Martinez, allowed Worms to score. After a strikeout by Perez, Manuel singled home Martinez to make it 10-1 Suns.

The Crawdads closed out the scoring in the sixth inning when 2B Ryan Rua belted a two-run home run to right-center field, setting the final score at 10-3. The home run was Rua's 18th of the season and tied him at the time with teammate Joey Gallo for the South Atlantic League lead.

Getting the win for Hagerstown was LHP Brett Mooneyham (2-1). Mooneyham pitched five innings, allowing one earned run on two hits and three walks while punching out five batters. RHP Tyler Smith (4-5) got pinned with the loss for Hickory. Smith tossed four innings, allowing four earned runs on six hits and three walks while striking out two.

NOTES: The Suns will wrap up the first half of the season with a four-game weekend series against the Lakewood Blueclaws starting Thursday at Municipal Stadium. LHP Nick Lee (1-2) will get the start for Hagerstown, making his fourth start of the season. Opposing him for Lakewood will be RHP Jonathan Musser (1-2), who will make his fifth start of the season. First pitch is scheduled for 7:05 p.m....The Crawdads wrap up the first half of the season with a four-game weekend series against Delmarva at LP Fran Stadium in Hickory. Tonight's game begins at 7:05 p.m.

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Photo Courtesy: Luis Marte, Hickory Crawdads