

## Rua's Three-Run Blast Rescues 'Dads

Written by Staff Reports  
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What was a difficult night at the plate for the Crawdads turned around on one swing of the bat Tuesday evening, as 'Dads All-Star second baseman Ryan Rua clubbed a 3-run home run in the sixth to

help lift the Hickory to a 4-3 win over the Hagerstown Suns.

The Crawdads entered the 6th trailing the Suns 3-1 and with Hagerstown pitcher Pedro Encarnacion having retired the last eight batters in a row. Leadoff hitter Nick Williams jump started the frame with a hustle infield single, followed one out later with a walk to Ronald Guzman.

That brought in Rua, who crushed a ball over the 25-foot wall in left-center field for a 3-run home run to put the 'Dads ahead 4-3. The long ball tied Rua with teammate Joey Gallo for the Minor League Baseball home run lead with 26 and also pushed the 'Dads South Atlantic League leading team total to 126.

Prior to the 6th, the lone 'Dads run came on a RBI single by Williams in the 3rd to give Hickory a 1-0 advantage. The Suns responded with two runs in the third and another in the fourth to put them up 3-1.

On the mound, Crawdads starting pitcher Frank Lopez battled through four innings with three runs allowed on four hits. Reliever Cody Kendall (2-2) earned the win with three shutout innings while Jose Monegro picked up his first save for the 'Dads with two scoreless frames. Encarnacion (6-5) was saddled with the loss after giving up all four runs on four hits over his six innings pitched.

Rua finished the night 1-3 with his home run and three RBI, raising his SAL-leading RBI total to 69 for the year. Williams ended the game 3-4 with a double while David Lyon went 1-3 with a run scored.

The win is the fourth in a row for the Crawdads (12-6) and moves them a half game ahead of the Suns (12-7) in the Northern Division. The 'Dads and Suns will play again on Wednesday, with a 7:05 pm scheduled first pitch.

**NOTES:** Rua's pivotal home run tonight lifts the Crawdads season homer total to 126. The single-season Crawdad record is 135 home runs while the SAL record stands at 173.....The Crawdads will be on the road for the next six days against Hagerstown and Lakewood. The 'Dads will return home for a week long home stand starting Wednesday, July 17th.....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