

Akins' Walk-Off Blast Lifts Hickory

Written by Staff Reports

Tuesday, 06 August 2013 09:06

The Hickory Crawdads entered the bottom of the 9th inning Monday night in a 3-3 tie with the Greensboro Grasshoppers, as a result of losing a 2-run advantage in the 8th. 'Dads left fielder Jordan Akins made sure everyone went home happy however, as he launched a 2-out, walk-off solo home run to dead center field for a

4-3 Hickory win at Crawdads Stadium.

Greensboro reliever Dane Stone looked like he was on his way to an easy frame in the 9th, as he struck out both Kevin Torres and David Lyon to bring up Akins with two outs and nobody on. Undaunted, the big outfielder crushed fastball that went soaring over the center field wall to give the 'Dads the 4-3 win.

The homer was the 7th of the year for Akins and the South Atlantic League leading 147th of the season for the Crawdads. The game-winning long ball also gave the 'Dads their 10th walk-off win of the 2013 season.

Prior to the 9th inning heroics, Hickory entered the 8th with a 3-1 lead thanks to some great pitching from starter Frank Lopez. Lopez had arguably his best game of the season for the 'Dads, as the Venezuelan southpaw went a season-high seven innings, allowing only one run on two hits, four walks and six strikeouts.

The Grasshoppers plated their lone run against Lopez in the 1st inning, when leadoff hitter Juancito Martinez lined the first pitch of the game into the right field corner for a triple and game in two batters later on an RBI sacrifice fly to put Greensboro up 1-0.

The Crawdads quickly responded with a run of their own in the bottom of the frame, with second baseman Taylor Wrenn launching a solo dinger to right-center to tie the game at 1-1. The home run was the first in affiliated baseball for Wrenn and came in just his second game in Hickory. The 1-1 deadlock lasted until the 6th, as the 'Dads took the lead when Wrenn walked and eventually came in on a throwing error to make the score 2-1. Hickory picked up another run the next inning when Chris Garia drove in David Lyon with an RBI sacrifice fly to lengthen the 'Dads advantage to 3-1.

Greensboro rallied in the 8th however, plating two unearned runs off of Hickory reliever Cody Ege to tie the game at 3-3, and set up Akins' game-winning blast.

Akins finished the night 3-4 with the homer, while Wrenn went 1-3 with a home run, a walk and two runs scored. Lyon also had a good fame going 1-3 with a walk and a run scored.

Hickory reliever Sam Wolff (1-0) earned the win with a scoreless top of the 9th complete with two strikeouts. Stone (4-3) took the loss for Greensboro after allowing Akins' walk-off home run. The victory pushes the Crawdads second half record to 25-19 while the Grasshoppers fall to 19-24 with the loss. The two clubs will play again Tuesday night at 7:00 pm in game two of their 3-game series.

NOTES: Wrenn's solo shot and Akins' game-winning dinger lifted the Crawdads season home run total to 147, just 26 away from the South Atlantic League record of 173 home runs in a season.....The Crawdads will stay at home for two more days with games against the Greensboro Grasshoppers. Tuesday is the always popular Dollar Night at Crawdads Stadium while Wednesday wraps up the home stand with Kids Run the Show Night! Check out the entire Crawdads promotional schedule here.....Individual Tickets for all Crawdads home games are

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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: Jordan Akins, Hickory Crawdads