

Bagshaw Loses Tough One, 3-2 to Hamilton

Righty retires 14 in a row and 19 of the first 20 Joes batters, but a three-run Hamilton seventh ruins his night.

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HAMILTON, Ohio—The box score just doesn't tell the story.

The final stats for Cincinnati's 3-2 loss at Hamilton on Saturday night show Blake Bagshaw (Northern Kentucky) yielding three earned runs in 6.1 innings to take the loss, but what the box does not say is that the right-hander retired 19 of the first 20 batters he faced—including 14 straight at one point—before running into some terrible luck in the bottom of the seventh inning, in which the Joes turned a 2-0 deficit into a 3-2 lead.

Bagshaw (0-3) walked Kyle Weldon (Miami)—his first free pass of the night and just the second Hamilton (24-15) baserunner—with one out in the seventh inning, and from then on, every break in the inning went the Joes' way. Patrick Curtin (Tiffin) smacked a fly ball down the right-field line that Jordan Keur (Michigan State) looked like he had caught in a diving effort just inside the chalk, but the ball squirted away and the runners ended up on second and third. Then on Ryan Rua's (Lake Erie) high fly to center into the driving rain, Nick Priessman (Eastern Illinois) misread the ball, which continued to carry and landed deep in the outfield for a two-run, game-tying triple. Bagshaw was replaced by Ryan Martin (Michigan State), but who was on the mound did not affect the Steam's fortune, as the Joes botched two suicide squeeze attempts but still managed to plate the go-ahead run. On the first attempt, Phil Bauer (Xavier) bunted foul, and on the second try, miscommunication ensued as Bauer actually took the pitch without even squaring around. Rua was hung out to dry, but neither Noah Zipko (Campbell) nor Brad Gschwind (Miami) could get to third base in time to retire Rua, who returned safely. Bauer made the Steam pay, lifting a sacrifice fly to right to plate the eventual game-winning run.

Some failed chances to add to their 2-0 lead hurt the Steam (16-18), as they did not score after loading the bases with one out in the fourth or after Gschwind's double to open the sixth (his fifth double in five games). A Ben Thomas (Xavier) rocket into left-center—extending his hitting streak to eight—and a Bryan Rose (Northern Kentucky) walk—his record-tying 23rd of the summer—gave Cincinnati a pair of two-out runners in the eighth, but Ryan Bellamy (Xavier) could not deliver another two-out RBI, popping out to end the inning. Brad Krohman (St. Catharine) pitched the eighth and ninth in relief of Michael Franklin (Penn State) to record his sixth save, while Franklin (3-0) yielded just one earned run in 7.0 innings to pick up the victory.

The game was a pitcher's duel from the get-go, as the first 11 batters of the game all went back to the dugout and three innings were in the books in just over half an hour. Franklin retired the first eight Cincinnati hitters he faced, but it took just two pitches for the Steam to get two runners on and one around with two out in the third. Priessman doubled before Michael Morris (Tennessee Tech) blooped a ball over the head of the shortstop Rua to put the Steam up 1-0.

Then in the fourth, Gschwind led off with a line-drive single to right-center (his seventh opposite-field knock in his last 13 hits) before Rose notched his 11th two-bagger when a diving Bryan Beaver (Miami) could not come up with his one-out liner to left, with Gschwind advancing to third. Bellamy then hit a ground ball down the third base line, and when Kevin Park (Dickinson State) decided to throw home, his toss clipped the helmet of Gschwind, allowing him to score and Bellamy to move to second. Zipko was then hit by a pitch—his eighth of the summer, second in Steam history—to load the bases, but an unconventional strike-'em-out, throw-'em-out double play followed, as Michael Basil (Indiana) swung and missed and Rose was picked off of third by catcher Wes Wilson (Indiana) to end the inning.

Meanwhile, Bagshaw continued to deal, punching out Beaver and Jimmy Brenneman (Lincoln Trail) to end the third and Wally Gerbus (Eastern Michigan) to begin the fourth. Bauer went down in the fifth for Bagshaw's fifth K, four of which were looking. After Bauer's two-out double in the second, no Hamilton hitter reached base until the seventh-inning walk. On the night, Bagshaw allowed just three hits and the one free pass while striking out five, giving him 23 strikeouts and just four walks in 26.1 innings this summer; including his time with the Norse this spring, Bagshaw has fanned 35 with just six walks in 41.1 innings. He now ranks second in the league in strikeout-

to-walk ratio and fourth in fewest walks per nine innings and would be first in both categories were it not for his seventh-inning free pass. Bagshaw still has not walked more than one batter in a game all season long.

After Gschwind's double in the sixth, Thomas hit a jam-shot to short on the first pitch, but the Joes caught another break as Rua threw high and appeared to pull Weldon off the bag, but Thomas was ruled out. A Rose fly out and a Bellamy line out then allowed Franklin to escape unharmed. Gschwind finished 2-for-5 with a run scored, his sixth multi-hit game in the past eight contests (.400 average over that span); only Ryan Strausborger (Indiana State) has collected more hits than Gschwind's 14 in an eight-game span over the last two years (he picked up 17—including two four-hit games—from July 7-19 of last season). The double by Gschwind also gave the Steam three two-base hits in each of the past five games.

Martin got just the two outs in the seventh before giving way to newcomer Shawn Marquardt (Miami), who tossed a scoreless eighth in his Cincinnati debut, fanning Weldon on a nasty breaking ball to strand a pair of runners in the inning.

The one-run loss was the ninth of the season for the Steam, who were swept in a season series for just the second time in club history (also went 0-4 versus Lima last summer). Cincinnati has swept an opponent in a season on nine different occasions.

The Steam wrap up the 2010 regular season with a home doubleheader versus the Stark County Terriers on Sunday afternoon (3:00 p.m. first pitch). Two wins will clinch a playoff spot for Cincinnati, with one win plus a Grand Lake loss also doing the trick (the Mariners play a doubleheader at first-place Licking County tomorrow afternoon). Licking County, Southern Ohio, Hamilton, Stark County, and Delaware have all punched their tickets to the postseason, with Cincinnati, Lima, and Grand Lake all vying to claim the final spot (Lake Erie, Xenia, and Lexington have been eliminated).