

Thomas' eighth-inning single gives Steam 3-2 victory over Grand Lake

All-Star Ian Kadish punched out eight to continue his success on the mound

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WESTERN HILLS, Ohio—An opposite-field single by Ben Thomas (Xavier) off of the previously-untouchable Andy Lowe (Heidelberg College) plated Ryan Strausborger (Indiana State) for the go-ahead run in the eighth inning as the Cincinnati Steam defeated the Grand Lake Mariners 3-2 Thursday night at Western Hills High School. The hit was the first given up by Lowe (0-1) on the season in 31 at bats, spanning 9.2 innings. Lowe's ERA remains at 0.00, however, as Strausborger reached on a throwing error to begin the inning by Michael Early (Indiana), who had tied the game with a base hit in the top of the inning.

Thomas' hit made a winner out of Michael Schum (Wright State), who blew a save for the second consecutive outing but tossed a 1-2-3 ninth to record the victory. Schum (1-0), an All-Star selection, lowered his ERA to 0.90 after tossing 1.1 innings and giving up one hit (Early's game-tying single).

Ian Kadish (Marshall) was magnificent for the third straight start, tossing 6.0 innings and striking out eight Mariners. Kadish did not walk a batter and allowed just four hits and an earned run. He threw 85 pitches in the game, 60 for strikes (70.6% strikes). Kadish's ERA drops to 1.63 on the season, including a microscopic 0.45 over his last three starts.

Tony Bucciferro (Michigan State) had a solid outing in the start for the Mariners (17-7), working 6.2 innings and giving up two earned runs on six hits. Bucciferro walked one (intentional) and struck out five. He also recorded a very high strike percentage, throwing 69.4% strikes in the game. Both pitchers benefited from the wide strike zone of home plate umpire Dale Goodwin, who rung up seven batters looking in the game.

Thomas led the Steam (13-9) with two hits (both to the opposite field) and an RBI in the game, while Ryan Bellamy (Xavier) went 2-for-3 with a run scored and a stolen base. Strausborger extended his hitting streak to 13 games with a sixth-inning single and also scored his league-leading 26th run (second-place has just 19). Strausborger is batting .375 (21-for-56) during the streak with 16 runs scored, including .455 (10-for-22) over his last five games. Travis Shaw (Kent State) also homered for the second time this season.

After Cameron Stykemain (Niagara) led off the game with an infield single, Kadish retired 11 batters in a row and 14 of 15. He struck out the side looking in the third inning on 13 pitches.

The Steam jumped out to a 1-0 lead in the bottom of the third on doubles by Bellamy and Brad Gschwind (Miami). Gschwind's double gave him 14 runs batted in on the year, which leads the team. The three other Steam batters in the inning struck out after Kadish fanned the side in the top half of the inning (five of the six strikeouts were looking).

The Mariners finally got to Kadish in the sixth inning to tie the game at one. Stykemain led off with a first-pitch double into the right-center field gap. Andrew Host (Iowa) then squared around to bunt, but a passed ball by Bellamy (his fourth in his last two games) allowed Stykemain to advance to third. Host then hit a towering fly ball to deep left for a sacrifice fly to plate Stykemain. The run snapped a streak of 21.0 consecutive scoreless innings for Kadish over his four starts this season.

Cincinnati missed an opportunity to plate a run and get a win for Kadish, which would have tied him for the league lead with Andrew Meyer of Lima (who beat the Steam Wednesday night). Strausborger led off the sixth inning with a line-drive single to center field. Gschwind followed with a beautiful sacrifice bunt to move Strausborger to second, and Strausborger made it a quick stay at second base, as he stole third on the first pitch to Jon Edgington (Miami). Grand Lake then elected to walk Edgington intentionally, and the move paid off, as Thomas grounded into a tailor-made 6-3 double play to end the threat.

Shaw led off the seventh inning with a mammoth home run on a 3-1 pitch from Bucciferro that carried onto Glenway Avenue behind the right field fence. Bellamy singled with two outs in the inning and stole second base but was stranded when T.J. Jones (Cincinnati) grounded to shortstop.

Schum was summoned to get the final out of the eighth inning after Host singled with two outs and advanced to second on a throwing error by Gschwind. The error proved to be costly, as Early hit a two-strike single to right off of Schum to tie the game at two. It marked the first time in the summer season that Schum had been asked to record a save of more than an inning after he notched nine saves of 2.0+ innings for Wright State (tops in the nation).

Cincinnati takes a week off for the All-Star break, with the next game scheduled for Friday, July 17 at home against the Anderson Servants at 7:05 p.m. The Steam will be hosting the 2009 Great Lakes Summer Collegiate League All-Star Game on July 15, with the first pitch of the GLSCL's version of the Midsummer Classic scheduled for 6:35 p.m. This year's Steam All-Stars (Blue Team) are Ryan Strausborger, Jon Edgington, Brad Gschwind, Ian Kadish, Mike Jefferson, and Michael Schum. With the selection, Gschwind becomes the fourth two-time All-Star selection in team history, joining Brandon Besl (2006, 2008), Tony Kennedy (2006-07), and Tommy Nurre (2007-08). In addition, Cincinnati set a new team record with three pitchers selected to the squad.