

Minor Happenings: Kinston Wins Championship

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Monday, September 11 2006 7:00 PM -

Lastoria celebrates the advanced Class-A championship for Kinston, and recaps their amazing run in the playoffs. Also, Akron's postseason progress is updated as they get set for the start of Game One in the Eastern League Finals.



Congratulations are in order for the Kinston Indians today, the new champions of the Carolina League. Kinston capped off a series sweep of Frederick last night with a thrilling Game 3 win, winning it 2-1 in 11 innings and capturing the Mills Cup.

Recapping the games, Kinston won Game 1 of the series on Saturday 10-4, and got a solid start from right-hander Joe Ness, a 2005 6th round draft pick out of

Ball

State

Ness

went 5 strong innings, giving up 5 hits and 2 runs while striking out 5, and newcomer Randy Newsom pitched 2.1 innings of shutout relief for the save.

Offensively, 3B Rodney Choy Foo (2-4, BB, 2B, HR, 2 RBIs) and OF

Jordan

Brown (1-3, BB, HR, 2 RBI) led the way.

In Game 2, Kinston got another solid starting performance in their 3-2 win. Lefty Mariano Gomez went 5 innings and gave up 4 hits, 3 walks and 2 runs while striking out 3.

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Once again, submarine right-hander Newsom came in late to shut the door, pitching 2 shutout

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and 8

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inning, holding the opposition hitless and striking out 4 batters.

1B Stephen Head (2-2, 2 BBs), OF Nathan Panther (2-4, HR, RBI), and 2B Argenis Reyes (2-4) led the attack on offense.

Up 2-0 in the series, Kinston had an ace in the hole...literally. Kinston sent the Carolina League Pitcher of the Year and staff ace Chuck Lofgren to the hill for the clincher, and he delivered maybe his most impressive performance as a pro.

In a tight contest that

Kinston

won 2-1 in 11 innings, Lofgren pitched 7 brilliant innings, only allowing 1 run on 5 hits, while walking 2 and striking out 7.

Reliever Randy Newsom was summoned for the third straight game to get out of a bases loaded jam in the 10

th

inning, and worked his way out of it.

Frederick

had had loaded the bases with one out and had the winning run at 3B when

Kinston

manager Mike Sarbaugh called for Newsom.

Newsome came in and struckout the first batter he faced, and retired the next batter on a harmless groundout.

The Indians ended up coming to bat in the 11

th

and pushed the deciding run across the plate on an infield single by Chris De La Cruz.

OF Jose Constanza (3-5) and 1B Stephen Head (2-5, 2B) also chipped in on offense.

Newsom's incredible relief pitching in the series won him MVP honors in the Mills Cup Finals. In three games, Newsom pitched 5.1 innings and did not allow a run, yielding only 1 hit and 1 walk while striking out 5.

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Newsome is the player to be named later the Indians received in the Coco Crisp trade with

Boston

He has a unique submarine pitching style, where his knuckles pretty much dust the ground on every pitch.

Since joining the Indians organization he has limited opposing right-handed hitters to a .179 average and in four stops for two different organizations he went a combined 4-3 with a 3.24 ERA in 39 games.

The Finals win finished an impressive postseason run for Kinston , as they went 5-0, outscoring their opponents 29-13.

The appearance in the Carolina League Finals was their third straight, and the title is their 2nd in the last three years (they won in 2004).

The win also avenged their loss to

Frederick last year in the Finals, which went the full five games and saw

Frederick win the decisive Game 5 in a 2-0 nail-biter.

Akron 's Season Continues....Barely

The Aeros beat Altoona in the opening round of the Eastern League (EL) playoffs, winning the series 3-2. After taking a comfortable 2-0 lead in the series by pounding out 24 runs in two games, Akron wa s held to a total of 2 runs in Game 3 and 4 losses.

Akron regrouped, and returned to

Canal

Park

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for Game 5 and got a very good outing collectively from the pitching staff as 5 pitchers combined to throw 9 innings and yield only 2 runs while striking out 11.

OF Brad Snyder had a 3-run HR in the 4

th

that opened the game up and proved to be the deciding hit.

Akron faces off with Portland in the EL Finals, and the best-of-five series starts tonight at

Canal

Park

The matchup is another rematch from last year, which the Aeros won in four games 3-1.

Akron

is looking to repeat as league champions, and win their 3

rd

title in 4 years.

Adam Miller is expected to start Game 1.

An in depth recap of the series will be provided this weekend when the series finishes up. Also, a

Kinston

and

Akron

wrap-up will round out the final installment of Minor Happenings for the season.

Minor Happenings should pick back up in late-October or early-November as the Indians get set to make roster moves, the Rule 5 Draft approaches, and winter leagues get going.