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WAGLE HELPS SLAMMERS WIGGLE TO FIRST PLACE

Joliet is in first place by themselves for the first time in franchise history

Box Score



(Normal, IL) – Through seven innings, the Joliet Slammers had only one hit Friday night. In the eighth inning, one swing of the bat changed everything.

John Wagle hit a two-out, three run home run to give Joliet (25-20) the lead for good in a 5-3 victory over the Normal CornBelts (25-21).

Bobby Leeper started the game with a single off Normal starter Ryan Sheldon (5-4), but was immediately doubled off on a Trey Manz line drive to third. After that, the Slammers' bats went quiet.

Meanwhile, the CornBelts got two runs off Joliet starter Ryne Miller in the bottom half of the first. Alvaro Ramirez started the inning with a walk. One out later Frank Martinez lined one out to right field for his seventh homer of the season.

Miller settled down and retired the next 10 batters he faced.

The Slammers got one run back without a hit in the third. Kyle Maunus hit a deep fly ball to center field that Ramirez dropped after misjudging off the bat. The three base error set up Brad Netzel who came through with a sacrifice fly to cut the deficit to 2-1.

Normal added an insurance run in the sixth. Martinez continued to hurt the Slammers as he doubled off Miller to start the inning. A grounder to second from Alexander moved him over to third. Then the Slammers intentionally walked Asif Shah. Mike Mobbs drew a walk of his own to load the bases with only one down. Jeff Dunbar hit a line shot to deep left that David Fox initially started in on; he would backpedal furiously and make a leaping catch to save multiple runs from scoring. The sacrifice fly made it 3-1 CornBelts. Miller struck out the next batter looking to get out of the jam with no further damage.

The righty went six innings in his second Slammers start, scattering three hits, giving up three runs, all earned, walking four and striking out three.

Jeremy Tietze (4-1) entered the game in the seventh and worked a 1-2-3 inning.

The Slammers entered the action having only won once when trailing after seven. They started the eighth inning quietly enough as Fox and Sean Estand grounded out. But Kyle Maunus worked the count against

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Sheldon and drew the team's first walk of the game. Brad Netzel followed with a sharp single and that brought up Wagle.

Wagle hit over .300 last year for Rockford, but is not known for his power as he had no homers on the season entering the game. He stunned the crowd of over 3000 with a [three run home run](#) to right and Joliet had an improbable 4-3 lead.

Tietze found trouble in the eighth. With one away Steven Alexander hit a ringing double. The Slammers brought in Chuck Lukanen to face Shah. The lefty got him to fly out to right, but pinch runner A.J. Miller advanced to third. Manager Bart Zeller brought Brian Smith in and Smith's first pitch got the Slammers out of the inning as Mike Mobbs grounded out to Wagle.

A David Fox [RBI single](#) in the ninth provided the insurance and Joliet native Ryan Quigley nailed down his league best 15th save with an easy [1-2-3](#) ninth inning.

With the win the Slammers are in first place by themselves for the first time in franchise history as the ThunderBolts lost Friday night.

Joliet is back in action Saturday night against Normal. Jake Renshaw (4-3, 4.03 ERA) takes the mound for the first place Slammers. First pitch is at 7:00 p.m. Central Time and all the action can be heard starting at 6:45 on AM 1340 WJOL and www.wjol.com.