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Joliet Searching for Momentum After All Star Break

By: Ryan Paris

JOLIET, IL - “Just like Cinderella, the Slammers were late to the ball” Thomas English said after the Slammers’s sixth strikeout on Princess and Superhero night.

It was an all around frustrating day for Joliet at the plate (27-30). Although the Windy City ThunderBolts (20-38) have the worst record in the Frontier League, they seem to have the Slammers’ number lately.

At the end of June, the ThunderBolts rattled off a three game sweep of the Slammers, knocking Joliet from a fringe playoff contender into a team treading water to stay in the race.

A few weeks later, the Jailbirds find themselves in a similar position: two games below .500 and a couple more out of the playoffs. In other words, a must win series. Two out of three would be good, but a sweep would really turn things around.

Come game time, Joliet started slow. It took the Slammers until the fourth inning to find their first hit of the game, when Ian Battipaglia legged out an infield single.

While the Slammer offense remained stagnant, David Maberry of the ThunderBolts opened the scoring by launching a two run homer that cleared the left field wall by a few feet.

The best chance for Joliet came in the fifth inning as Antonio Valdez laid down a bunt to reach base (That’s two hits, neither leaving the infield, for those counting), followed by a Bryan Belo base hit that found the outfield grass. However, the momentum was quickly extinguished following a force out at second base.

The Bolts added two more runs on a botched fielder’s choice and a sacrifice fly, giving them a commanding 4-0 lead.

The Slammers finally broke out of jail in the seventh, when Antonio Valdez cranked a solo shot to right center. That made it a 4-1 game. Brandon Heidal provided a brief glimmer of hope with another home run in the ninth, but the scoring ended there.

ThunderBolt pitcher Dylan Kirkeby tossed 7.1 shutout innings, and Windy City took the lead in the season series as a result. That made it four in a row over a Joliet team sorely in need of wins.

Tomorrow, the venue flips to Ozinga Field, where the Slammers continue the fight against the ThunderBolts. They’ll be back at Slammers Stadium on Tuesday for the world record hotdog drop.

For information on season tickets, premium suites or group outings, please visit the Slammers’ official website at www.jolietslammers.com.

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The Joliet Slammers play in downtown Joliet, Illinois, and are members of the professional, independent Frontier League. The Frontier League is the largest MLB Partner League with 16 teams spanning from the Mississippi River to the East Coast. Visit the Slammers online at www.jolietslammers.com or call the ticket office at 815-722-2287 for more information! Don’t forget to “Like” the Slammers on Facebook at www.facebook.com/jolietslammers, follow them on Instagram at @jolietslammersofficial or follow them on Twitter at @jolietslammers!

This game recap was written by Ryan Paris.