

Slammers' Grueling August Slump Continues With Sweep by Mississippi

By: Ryan Paris

JOLIET, IL - In the dog days of summer, seven game winning streaks turn into six game losing streaks faster than you break a sweat from simply stepping outside.

One week ago, the Slammers (36-42) were looking forward to a late season playoff push. Today, they found themselves eight games out of the postseason and on the verge of being swept by the Mississippi Mud Monsters (39-38).

On this specific Dog Day, the one that involves fans bringing their pups to the park, not even the alternate uniform buff could stop the Slammers from losing 4-3 in extras to Mississippi.

The Jailbirds struck in the bottom of the first when Bryant Flete roped a double into the right-center gap, scoring Liam McArthur from first base. Flete also scored when Braylin Marine reached on an infield single.

Mississippi's Kasten Furr (who has the perfect name for Dog Day) was the first player to get the Mud Monsters on the board, though Ryan Daly was able to limit the damage to just one run.

The Slammer lead grew back to two in the fifth when Antonio Valdez beat out a throw from the shortstop, allowing Brandon Heidal to score.

But Mississippi responded in the sixth with a Karell Paz 2-RBI double. He moved up to third on a Blake Berry fielding error and narrowly avoided an Ian Battipaglia tag in the process.

Slammers manager Mike Pinto wasn't convinced, storming out of the dugout and exchanging words with third base umpire Dalton Phillips before retreating to the mound and calling in a relief pitcher.

In the ninth, Blake Berry led off the frame and lofted a ball into right field. His eyes never left the outfield as he raced around first base, looking for a hustle double.

Whether it was taking too wide of a turn, getting a bad read, or just wanting to make a game changing play, it didn't matter. You could already hear the groans from the dugout before he began his slide. After being tagged out, the offense stalled and the game went to extras.

Mississippi broke the deadlock by scoring the runner from second and turned it over to the Slammers with a one run lead. When things are going right, the Slammers win the close games. When things are going wrong, the Slammers hit three groundouts and fail to score the runner.

Recently, the latter has been the case. Today was no exception.

For a team that didn't have a three game streak of any kind last season, the roller coaster they've been on this year continues to be unpredictable.

Joliet returns to action against the rival Windy City Thunderbolts on Tuesday. First pitch is at 6:35 pm.

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