

By: Ryan Paris

JOLIET, IL - Imagine you're about to take an at bat in a professional baseball game. It's the sixth inning. You've been in a slump for the past week. Tonight, your team can't get anything going. They're looking to you to ignite a rally.

The PA announcer begins to call out your name as you step up to the plate. He always reads it in a dramatic, guttural way. "Now batting... number 18..." Then he trails off. A grid of a dozen of your teammates appear on the video board, shouting your name all at the same time.

You dig into the box, maybe laughing, maybe a bit embarrassed by the whole thing. Obviously you take the first pitch. It's a ball.

The second one though, you're ready. You jump on it and line it into the outfield for a base hit. You watch the pitcher for a couple of pitches, gradually growing your lead, and then you take off for second base. You're in there with plenty of time to spare, and you even move over to third when the throw gets away.

Your teammate brings you home on the next pitch. You walk back into the dugout, still thinking about that video.

Was that the sound of harmony? Cacophony? That was the sound of "IAN... BATTIPAGLIA!"

All of that actually happened in the sixth inning of the Joliet Slammers 2-1 loss to the Windy City ThunderBolts.

Joliet fell behind right from the jump when Michael Sandle hit a ball so far that outfielder Jose Contreras had no idea where it landed.

The Bolts then doubled their advantage with a Daryl Ruiz double in the third inning.

In the fourth, the Slammers had a chance to end their scoring drought that dated back to the third inning of yesterday's game.

Much like the scenario from yesterday's game where Windy City produced two runs, Antonio Valdez got caught in a rundown trying to stretch a single into a double. Over at third base, Braylin Marine waited for an opportunity to bolt home. When he saw a window, he took off and was caught at the plate a half second before he could slide in safely.

As previously mentioned, the Slammers eventually got on the board in the sixth. It was Marine who drove Battipaglia in from third base, cutting the Windy City advantage in half.

Before Battipaglia could take his next at bat though, the ThunderBolts pulled starting pitcher Issac Milburn after he struck out ten batters and allowed only one run across 7.1 innings.

The added time between batters gave the Slammers the opportunity to play a second Ian Battipaglia video. This one started the same, but each player from the grid introduced him individually, progressively getting more animated as the video went on.

Unfortunately, the magic didn't carry over into that at bat, as he went down on strikes.

And Joliet was unable to muster up anything in the ninth, even with a leadoff runner on base.

With the season series now at 6-5 Joliet, tomorrow's game will decide if the Slammers take home bragging rights. First pitch is at 6:35 pm in Crestwood.

The Slammers will return home on Tuesday, August 26th for a six game home stand to close out the season.

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.jolietsslammers.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/jolietsslammers, follow them on Instagram at @jolietsslammersofficial or follow them on Twitter at @jolietsslammers!

This game recap was written by Ryan Paris.