

AUGUSTA, NJ- Fireworks are usually on Saturdays at Skylands Stadium, but the Sussex County Miners decided to let them go a day early as they erupted for three home runs in a thrilling 9-6 win over the Tri-City Valley Cats.

Donning their New Jersey Regulars alternates tonight, the Miners were able to get things going in the second inning as they threatened with the bases loaded against Valley Cats starting pitcher, Mikell Manzano. With a full count to Miners right fielder Alec Sayre, Manzano delivered an offspeed pitch that caught too much of the plate, of which Sayre obliterated over the left center field wall for a grand slam. This was Sayre's fourth home run of the season, all of which have come in the month of June.

In the fifth inning, the dynamic power duo of Mahki Backstrom and Sean Roby Jr. went back to back against Manzano to extend the Miners lead to 7-0. Backstrom continues to hit at a red hot pace batting, .366, with 7 extra base hits, and 10 RBIs over his last 10 games. For Roby, it was his 39th RBI of the season which puts him with the fourth most in the Frontier League.

The Miners seemed to be well in control of this game, but Tri-City right fielder Jake Reinisch wasn't going to go down without throwing a few haymakers. In the sixth, Reinisch smoked a three run triple to cut the lead to 7-3. After a Miners insurance run in the 7th off an RBI single from Dom Johnson, Reinsisch came back up again in the eighth with runners on second and third and cracked his seventh home run of the season to make it a two run game.

With a two run lead in the top of the ninth, manager Chris Widger called on his closer Matt Stil to record the final three outs. With only 15 pitches, Stil retired the Valley Cats in order to secure his third save in ten days and the Miners 29th win of the season to put them a full nine games ahead of New York in the Atlantic East division.

The Miners will return to action tomorrow night at Skylands Stadium for the second game of their three game set with the Tri-City Valley Cats, first pitch is slated for 6:35 PM.

By: Anthony Cafone