

Grays silence Grizzlies

Base runners were hard to come by Saturday afternoon, as the Cheyenne Grizzlies (14-5) fell to the Greeley Grays 8-2 at Pioneer Park.

A night after putting up 21 runs, the Grizzlies, a team that averages 8.4 runs per game, couldn't buy a hit.

"They kept us off-balanced," head coach Aaron Holley said. "The key for them was they could throw their breaking ball for strikes in any count they wanted. We just never made the adjustment at the plate."

Grizzlies' starter Howard Heinrich cruised through the first three innings, allowing just two base runners and striking out three.

"I was just able to establish the off-speed pitch," Heinrich said. "My fastball was spotting up and they were doing a good job of getting themselves out."

But in the fourth inning, a fielding error by shortstop Jose Jauregui to lead off the inning, and an error due to miscommunication in the outfield two batters later, extended Heinrich's inning, resulting in three unearned runs.

"As a pitcher there's not much you can do about that," Heinrich said. "I try to just stay focused and do the best I can to give the guys opportunities to make plays. Today was a day that some of those plays weren't made, and those days are gonna come, but for the most part our guys do a good job, and we'll be able to shake this one off."

Heinrich worked 5 1/3 innings, allowing seven runs on seven hits but got the loss despite just four of the runs being earned and walking just a single batter.

"I think Howard did a great job," Holley said. "He pitched into the sixth even though we made the errors and different stuff extended innings for him. He threw very efficient. You can't ask your pitcher to do much more than what he did today. He threw strikes, letting the defense make the plays, which unfortunately didn't happen. He should hang his head up high knowing that he pitched well."

Reliever Taylor Fallon came in to finish the sixth, hitting his first two batters before settling down and getting the final two outs.

Fallon worked scoreless seventh and eighth innings, and Willie Vizoso pitched the ninth, only allowing an infield single.

But the offense never came to life.

Cheyenne got one base runner after the fifth inning, a ninth-inning pinch-hit single by Ryan Schwenn, as Greeley starter Logan Hall set down 13 of the final 14 batters.

On the evening, Hall threw a complete game, allowing eight hits on one walk, striking out seven.

“He threw well. I think we can hit him, but we didn’t have guys go up there and make the adjustment. We kept looking to hit the fastball instead of waiting on the off-speed pitch.”

While the offense struggled, what upset Holley the most were the mental mistakes. With runners on the corners and one out in the fourth inning, catcher Mike Henrichs was caught between second and third on a groundball to third base. One batter later, second baseman Mike Wido ran himself out of the inning when Hall threw a pickoff attempt to second base and Wido was caught in a pickle before getting tagged out.

“You’re gonna have games where your offense isn’t on or where, defensively, you make errors,” Holley said. “We made some bonehead mistakes on the bases. The physical mistakes we can live with. You don’t want to see them and you hate them but it’s the mental mistakes, not knowing that you’re not supposed to go on a groundball to the left side of the infield when you’re on second, that absolutely kill you.”

Cheyenne’s two runs came in the third and fourth innings when centerfielder Kevin Logan singled to lead off the third, stole second, reached third on a base hit by Jauregui and scored on designated hitter Mike Domenick’s sacrifice fly. Third baseman Ryan Javech began the fourth with a single to left field. He was moved to second on a sacrifice bunt by right fielder Andy Athans, to third on Henrich’s single and came home on a wild pitch.

Holley was ejected in the sixth inning for arguing a call when Wido was taken out on a potential inning-ending double play. With one out and the bases loaded, Greeley’s Yogi Gunther grounded to Jauregui at short. Jauregui flipped to Wido to get the first out, but Wido was never able to attempt the throw to first because third baseman Derrick Bleeker plowed him over.

One run came in to score, but with Wido on the ground and Holley out to argue the call, a second run came in, putting the Grays up 8-2.

The loss snapped Cheyenne’s five-game win streak dating back to June 19 and was the first loss to Greeley of the season.

The Grizzlies will take a few days off before traveling to Laramie for a 6:30 game Wednesday night. Please note that the original schedule had this game listed as a home game.