

Home-opening Rout Grizzlies open season with 12-run slugfest

The Cheyenne Grizzlies opened their 2010 season with an offensive explosion.

Seven hitters stepped to the plate Saturday evening before the visiting Laramie Colts recorded an out. By that time, the Grizzlies had already plated four runs and never looked back, winning 12-5 at Pioneer Park.

The Grizzlies brought 10 batters to the plate in the first inning, scoring five times on three hits, three walks and three passed balls.

The early lead allowed starting pitcher Josh Boyer to relax on the mound and pitch ahead.

"It's a new season and a new group of guys so we really didn't know what to expect," Boyer said. "It's a lot nicer pitching ahead so it was good to get the early runs and be able to relax a little."

The Grizzlies never trailed and Boyer, who was making his first appearance in nearly a year because of a required redshirt last season due to transfer rules, showed no sign of rust.

"It felt great to be out there," Boyer said. "Just being on the mound and getting the first out in the first inning gave me a big rush."

The lefty allowed just one run, which was unearned, on two hits, two walks and an impressive five strikeouts over three innings.

"Josh looked good; he's a good pitcher," head coach Aaron Holley said. "He's been throwing bullpen sessions and staying in shape so I knew he'd be fine. He's the veteran; I knew he'd get the Opening Day-start.

"He probably could have gone five more innings but he knew beforehand we were going to throw each of our pitchers for three innings."

Cheyenne's offense got going from the first batter when center fielder Kevin Logan was walked but his hustle allowed him to reach second base when Colts' catcher Brian Patrick couldn't handle the pitch.

"We have some great hitters but something that kind of caught me off guard was our speed," Holley said. "That can be a huge benefit."

On the night, the Grizzlies stole five bases on seven attempts, including a pair from both KC Judge and Rory Kolo.

Right-hander Joe Luft relieved Boyer with three innings of quiet work, his line reading zero runs on two hits, one walk and three strikeouts.

The Colts, though, made things interesting in the seventh with four runs to bring the score to 7-5. After allowing a leadoff walk and a base hit, pitcher Howard Heinrich got Laramie's Justin Kanas to strike out on a nasty curve. However, three consecutive hits and a walk chased Heinrich out of the game. After

walking his first man, reliever Jack Winters got Logan Frame, the 10th batter of the inning, to dribble one back to the mound for the final out.

The Grizzlies came right back, scoring three runs in the bottom half of the inning to widen the gap.

“We were able to use a late-game surge to kill the potential rally the Colts had going,” Holley said. “We had some great timely hits. This is a team that’s going to pick each other up and hit a lot.”

In the game, the Grizzlies slugged out 16 hits and reached base a total of 29 times while getting out just 24 times. Fourteen different players saw at-bats Saturday night, with all but one, including all five reserve players, reaching base at least once.

Judge led the offensive charge, reaching base five times and recording four hits while scoring twice and driving in a pair. Also with multiple hits was second baseman Jose Jauregui (3-for-4, one run, one RBI) and Ryan Javech (3-for-5, one run, one RBI).

“It was exciting to get out there and hit like we did (Saturday night),” Javech said. “We strung a bunch of good hits together and scored when we needed to.”

Cheyenne added two more runs in the next frame and Winters set down six of the final eight batters of the game. One of those plays was the defensive play of the evening when Kanas hit a sharp grounder down the third-base line. Javech fielded the ball several feet into foul territory, throwing an off-balanced across-the-body strike to first baseman Mike Domenick to get the out.

The Grizzlies look to keep the success going today in Fort Collins at 6:15 p.m.

“This was a good first win,” Holley said. “We’ll build on this and go from here. We’ve got a group of good guys with good character and good chemistry.”

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