

## BANDITS QUIET KERNELS, EARN FIRST-ROUND SWEEP

Written by Marco LaNave

Friday, 06 September 2013 14:57

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Quad Cities advances to Western Division final and will host Beloit for Game 1 on Saturday

**CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa (SEPT. 5, 2013)** – For a second straight night, the Quad Cities River Bandits held the potent Cedar Rapids Kernels offense in check on Thursday night, and third baseman Rio Ruiz hit a go-ahead home run in a three-run fourth inning leading to a 4-2 win and two-game sweep of the Midwest League Western Division semifinal at Perfect Game Field at Veterans Memorial Stadium.

Quad Cities won its ninth straight postseason game, dating back to the 2011 Midwest League Championship run, and ended the season for the Kernels, who had a league-high 88 regular-season wins. The River Bandits will host the Beloit Snappers for Game 1 of the Midwest League Western Division Final on Saturday. Beloit swept its division semifinal against the Clinton LumberKings Thursday. Saturday's game time will be announced on Friday, and second-round tickets will be available beginning at noon Friday.

The Kernels took the first lead for a second straight game, as center fielder Jonathan Murphy led off the bottom of the first inning with a home run to left field off left-hander Joe Bircher (1-0).

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But Bircher bounced back to retire six straight hitters and work around single baserunners in the third and fourth innings. In the fifth he allowed a two-out double by third baseman Joel Licon and Murphy to reach on an error by shortstop Carlos Correa, but Bircher fanned shortstop Niko Goodrum to strike out the side. He completed five innings and gave up one earned run on three hits while striking out four batters.

The River Bandits tied the game against right-hander Tim Shibuya (0-1) in the second inning, as third baseman Rio Ruiz worked a two-out walk, and catcher Roberto Pena drove him in with a double down the left-field line. In a 1-1 tie, the visitors loaded the bases in the third inning, but Shibuya got a strikeout and groundout to escape the jam.

Ruiz broke the tie by launching the first pitch of the fourth inning to the base of the scoreboard in right-center field for the first River Bandits playoff home run since Game 3 of the 2011 Championship. Pena then reached on an infield single, and right fielder Jordan Scott placed a bunt single to first base. A sacrifice moved both runners into scoring position, and with two outs, center fielder Teoscar Hernandez grounded a two-run single through the left side of the infield for a 4-1 lead.

The Kernels managed to rally in the sixth inning against left-hander J.D. Osborne, as second baseman Jorge Polanco hit a leadoff double and right fielder Adam Brett Walker drew a walk. Polanco scored on a groundout, but right-hander Patrick Christensen came in to strike out designated hitter Travis Harrison. Christensen worked perfect seventh and eighth innings to retire all seven batters in 2 1/3 innings. For a second straight night, right-hander Andrew Walter pitched a perfect ninth inning, completing a game-ending string of 11 consecutive batters retired by the bullpen, which allowed only one run on two hits in the series. After leading the league in runs scored in the regular season, the Kernels had three combined runs on eight total hits in two postseason games.

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Thursday's River Bandits victory also means The Captain's Table at 4801 River Drive in Moline will offer The Captain's Table Victory Discount Friday, Sept. 6. Anyone who mentions the River Bandits victory can receive a free appetizer or dessert with the purchase of two lunches or dinners with beverages on Friday, Sept. 6.

**UP NEXT:** Saturday's playoff game will again feature all regular individual seats for \$5 each, and 12-ounce beer and soda, as well as hot dogs, peanuts, popcorn and nachos will each be \$1. Tickets will go on sale Friday at noon at the River Bandits box office at Modern Woodmen Park, by phone at [563-324-3000](tel:563-324-3000) and online at [www.riverbandits.com](http://www.riverbandits.com). Season ticket and mini-plan packages start at just seven games and begin at less than \$50. Call a River Bandits account representative today to choose your seats and get the details of our various mini-plan packages.

**ABOUT THE BANDITS:** The River Bandits ownership is making one of the biggest improvements to Modern Woodmen Park since the ballpark was first built back in 1931! A new Ferris wheel, standing 112 feet over the playing field, is planned for next spring, along with a carousel and other new games and attractions. This season, the team just unveiled a new 300-foot long dual zip line, a rock climbing wall, a Mediacom Frog Hopper, and a number of new bounce houses. The team also boasts a new major league affiliate, the Houston Astros, and fans can see 2012 No. 1 overall pick Carlos Correa and the River Bandits in the playoffs. With new rides, new attractions, new improvements, a new affiliate and future major league stars, the second half of this season is one every fan will not want to miss!

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