

NJ Nationals Split Doubleheader with CP Royals

Jeff Lombardi Jr.

EDISON, N.J.- The New Jersey Nationals (3-2) split a doubleheader with the CP Royals (2-1-1) on Saturday, losing the first game 9-4 before handing the Royals their first loss of the season by a score of 7-2.

Game One

After a scoreless top of the first inning, the Nationals took an early 1-0 advantage as junior third baseman, [Vincenzo Sita](#) (Bayonne, N.J./Ramapo College) drove a deep fly ball over the wall in center for a solo home run, his first of the season.

The Royals would take the lead in the next half inning however after three consecutive batters reached base with two outs to make the score 3-1.

In the bottom of the second inning, the Nationals cut the deficit to one after Sita singled home freshman designated hitter, [Eric Vaz](#) (Edison, N.J./Johns Hopkins University) who doubled earlier in the frame. The Nationals would add a pair of runs in the following inning on three consecutive, two out doubles by freshman left fielder, [Mike McLaughlin](#) (Clifton, N.J./NJCU), Vaz and freshman first baseman, [Eric Zimmerman Jr.](#) (Totowa, N.J./College of Mount Saint Vincent) to take a 4-3 lead.

Over the next two innings, the Nationals defense faltered as the Royals plated three runs on as many errors to retake the lead, 6-4.

The Royals would score a pair of runs in the sixth inning and an additional run in the seventh to make the eventual final score; 9-4.

Nationals starting pitcher, junior, [Jeff Lombardi Jr.](#) (Kendall Park, N.J./William Paterson University) took the loss after pitching the first five innings, surrendering six runs; four earned on seven hits and a pair of walks while striking out six. Sophomore, [Andrew Scholz](#) (West Orange, N.J.) worked the final two frames, allowing three runs, two earned on four hits, while striking out two.

Despite issuing four free passes over just 2 ½ innings of work in relief of Royals starting pitcher, freshman, [Anthony Trano](#) (Moonachie, N.J./Caldwell University), sophomore southpaw, [Sean Lewandoski](#) (Wayne, N.J./Montclair State University) picked up the win after holding the Nationals offense scoreless before giving way to right-hander, [Eamon Catherina](#) (Ridgefield, N.J./University of Bridgeport) who recorded the final six outs.

Game Two

Playing as the away team in the second game of the double header, the Nationals struck first after consecutive doubles by two, three batters, freshman second baseman, [Francis Prior](#) (North Caldwell, N.J./NYU) and classmate, center fielder, [Nick Minter](#) (Millburn, N.J./Brookdale Community College) plated their first run.

After the Royals evened the score in their first at-bat, the Nationals regained the lead in the second inning after a double by sophomore first baseman, [Chris Navarro](#) (Hackensack, N.J./Monroe College) scored junior catcher, [Steve Lazicki](#) (Jackson, N.J./Moravian College) who reached base on a single.

In his next at-bat, in the fourth inning, Navarro further extended the Nationals lead sending deep fly ball over wall in straight away center field for a solo home run.

In the following frame, the Nationals extended their lead to four as Minter, after being hit by pitch, manufactured a run by himself, stealing second and third base on consecutive pitches and scoring on an errant throw to third on his stolen base attempt.

The Nationals tacked on a pair of runs in the seventh inning on a pair of Royals errors to take a 7-1 lead. In the home half of the frame, Royals sophomore second baseman, [Alex Kokos](#) (Wayne, N.J./Rowan University) hit a solo home run to left field to make the score 7-2.

On the mound, sophomore, [Josh Cruz](#) (Bloomfield, N.J./Neumann College) worked the first three innings for the Nationals allowing one run on one hit and two walks while striking out one. Freshman, [Jason Rivera](#) (Clifton, N.J./NJCU) came on in relief and allowed just one run; the Kokos home run, on three hits and one walk while punching out four to secure the win.

Freshman starting pitcher, [Kyle Sears](#) (Oakland, N.J./Salem University) was the losing pitcher, surrendering four earned runs in as many innings.

The Nationals will take on the DiMaggio Bombers on Wednesday, June 6 at Linden Memorial Stadium at 5:30 p.m.