

Roswell Daily Record

Invaders go 10, win in home debut

Posted on 14 May 2011 .



Roswell leadoff hitter Cliff Thomas finishes his swing and gets ready to leg out a single after recording the Invaders' first hit at their home park in the bottom of the first inning, Friday. The Invaders won 6-5 in 10 innings for their first win in their debut at Joe Bauman Stadium. (Kevin J. Keller Photo)

Sports fans hear the phrase all the time, "From goat to hero."

Never was the phrase more appropriate than in the Roswell Invaders' home opener against Ruidoso on Friday night.

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Invader center fielder Cliff Thomas dropped a potential game-winning fly ball in the top of the ninth, but ended up scoring the winning run in the bottom of the 10th as Roswell downed Ruidoso 6-5 to improve its record to 1-2.

The Invaders grabbed the lead in the home half of the seventh.

With one out, Roswell's Matt Palko hit a blooper down to left and was able to leg out a double.

After Adrian Martinez flew out, Trivon Howard drove in Palko with a single that gave the Invaders a 4-3 lead.

Palko pushed the lead to two when he scored on an error by Chris Davis.

The score remained 5-3 until the top of the ninth.

Ruidoso's first two batters of the ninth reached base via a walk and a hit.

A sacrifice bunt by Drew Peterson moved the runners over and Davis followed that up with a strikeout that brought the Osos to their final out.

Roswell's Edgar Correa made Ruidoso's Case Rigby hit a lazy fly ball to center, but Thomas dropped it, which enabled the Osos to tie the game.

Neither Roswell or Ruidoso could do anything in its next at bats, but in the bottom of the 10th, Thomas redeemed himself.

The Invader inning started with a walk by Jake Bruns, who was replaced by pinch runner Eric Williams.

Thomas followed up the walk with a perfectly placed bunt that should have put two on with nobody out, but a baserunning error by Williams got him thrown out at third.

Brian Ramirez drew a walk, which brought Troy Frazier to the plate.

Roswell put on a hit-and-run and it worked as Frazier smacked a single to right field that easily plated Thomas.

Roswell manager Chris Paterson said that he brought Thomas to Roswell because of the impact he could have.

"Cliff is one of those guys that plays the game really hard and really aggressive," he said.

"Sometimes it works out and sometimes it doesn't. Today it did both. That's why I brought him here, because he is that type of player that can impact a game for the best. It was scary, but it worked."

Although Roswell collected 15 hits as a team, Paterson was quick to praise his pitching staff.

"Correa, Reed Brown and (Brandon) Godfrey all did their parts," he said. "It was a great job by the bullpen. Brown has ice running through his veins. The game started off with Josh Grady just throwing a gem out there, which we needed as a stopper to get us back in the win column."

More than 500 fans attended Roswell's first professional baseball home game in 52 years and Paterson said the enthusiasm was great.

"It was a great crowd," he said. "I think we will get just as good of one tomorrow (Saturday) with some of the stuff that was going on today. The crowd was into it the entire game and they loved the lime green jerseys and the lime bases. They were all on our side and that's what I like to see and hear."

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