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One KC Monarchs player hit for the cycle. Another gave a fun souvenir | Weekend recap

Carter Woodiel, Special to the Star

July 31, 2023

A fan favorite is back on the field for the Kansas City Monarchs.

Jan Hernandez, the third-year slugger who was a league player of the year candidate the last two seasons, returned from a knee injury Thursday.

The right fielder wasted no time in making an impact, hitting a go-ahead home run and driving in four runs in just his second game back on Friday in Sioux City. He signed his home run ball from Friday's game for the young fan who caught it.

[EMBEDDED TWEET WITH PHOTO OF JAN AND YOUNG FAN APPEARS HERE]

https://twitter.com/J_Wright20/status/1685372536807186433

"We play for the fans. We play for the kids," Hernandez said. "It's a priceless moment."

WELCOMING A FORMER MAJOR LEAGUER

Bubby Rossman's high-90s fastball has struck out batters in the major leagues and the World Baseball Classic. Now he's the latest big leaguer to join the Monarchs.

Rossman, 31, made his MLB debut with the Phillies in 2022. It was eight years after his pro debut, including five seasons out of affiliated baseball.

"I've always felt like as long as I'm throwing hard and staying healthy that I'm going to keep playing baseball," Rossman said. "Just keep grinding. Getting back to the majors is my goal."

Rossman pitched with Team Israel in the World Baseball Classic earlier this year. The Monarchs' roster now features eight former major leaguers, a season high.

HITTING FOR THE CYCLE

Justin Wylie etched his name into history for the Kansas City Monarchs Thursday afternoon. The All-Star infielder hit for the cycle in the Monarchs' game with Kane County.

Wylie's day began with a single and an RBI double. He blasted his eighth home run in the fifth inning and finished his feat with an RBI triple in the eighth.

Wylie, who played college baseball at San Diego State and Arizona, is in his fourth professional season. He's the only player in the Monarchs' lineup without Triple-A experience, having never played in affiliated baseball.

Still, he sits at the second spot in the batting order and is second on the team with a .905 OPS.

WHAT'S NEXT ON THE SCHEDULE

The Monarchs are in a bit of a lull on the field, winning two of their nine games since the All-Star break. That's included six one-run losses, including three walk-off defeats.

The Monarchs got back on the winning track with a 4-0 victory at Sioux City on Sunday. They face last-place Winnipeg for a six-game home series starting Tuesday night.

"It's a bump in the road right now," Hernandez said. "I have no doubt we'll be good in August for the playoff push. We have to maintain focus and keep playing together. That's it."