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Blue Springs' Hall making most of opportunity with Kansas City Monarchs baseball team

By Carter Woodiel, Special to the Star

August 14, 2023

Allante Hall was ready for the moment.

A few days earlier, the Kansas City Monarchs' bullpen catcher heard the news everyone with his job waits for: He'd been signed to the team's active roster. On Sunday, an injury to catcher Gavin Collins brought the Blue Springs native into the game.

Hall hit the first pitch out for his first professional home run.

[EMBEDDED TWITTER/X VIDEO OF THE HOME RUN APPEARS HERE]

<https://twitter.com/kscitymonarchs/status/1690811983237443584>

"My buddy [shortstop] LJ [Hatch] was like, 'Be ready for the fastball; you're gonna get it.'" Hall said. "I don't know what happened. I saw the pitch, I got my foot down early and I exploded through the baseball."

Hall had two hits in 27 plate appearances at the professional level before Sunday. His solo shot in the sixth stood up as the deciding blow in the Monarchs' 4-2 win over the Lincoln Saltdogs at Haymarket Park.

For Hall, the home run is some well-earned recognition for his work behind the scenes.

"I had envisioned that I would get the chance to play at some point," Hall said. "It's crazy how I came into the game. I'm praying for Gavin. I picked up where he left off."

The 24-year-old didn't always want to be a catcher. He was a shortstop as a kid. But at 14, his team's catcher went down with an injury. The coach, Allante's father, asked who wanted to step up.

No one raised their hand at first, but Allante agreed to try it out.

"I ended up getting back there, threw a couple runners out, and I fell in love with it," the younger Hall said. "Ever since then I've been catching."

There's no guarantee Hall will get another shot. Manager Joe Calfapietra is constantly working to bring new talent to the first-place club. The Monarchs' roster features eight former major leaguers.

No matter what happens, Hall will keep working.

"I'm just doing my job," Hall said. "I'm just doing whatever Joe asks for me to do. We're just going to keep it going."

The Monarchs hold the best record in the American Association at 46-33. They begin a seven-game homestand Tuesday night against the Sioux Falls Canaries, who have won eight in a row.

Fans can find the club's schedule and ticket information at MonarchsBaseball.com or on the American Association app.