

Aviator Field

The Box Score

The Westhampton Aviators gave it to the North Fork Ospreys in this one as they won by a score of 10-0. The mercy rule was put in effect after Westhampton scored four runs in the seventh inning to cap off a successful day at the plate. The Aviators were led by the top of their lineup as the 1-4 hitters went 9-15 with 8 RBIs. Erubiel Candelario earned the win as he pitched 5 shutout innings and allowed just one hit. The Aviators improved to 6-3 on the young season, while the loss dropped North Fork's record to 1-10.

More Than the Box Score

Although Candelario only struck out two batters in this one, he looked much more in control than in his last outing against Long Island. The righty had a much more assertive demeanor on the bump. He rarely, if at all, shook off his catcher and worked quickly. Like last start, Candelario's arm speed still slowed down on his off-speed pitches, however, he came up with a new way to confuse the opposing bats. The Bronx native was able to create deception with his varying delivery styles. At times he would switch from having his hands at his belt to above his head and he would also slow, or sometimes pause, when he raised his front leg. The only sign of struggle from Candelario came when he would think too much. At times, he tried to

get a little too cute and throw his breaking ball in fastball counts when he really did not need to. His fastball plays well at this level and if hitters could not even touch it on 2-0 they certainly won't touch it with two strikes.

Cornerstones

Even with the struggle at the dish in this one, a couple of Osprey hitters showed signs of good things to come. Third basemen, Mason LaPlante, and first basemen, Jason Meyer, had solid approaches at the plate. LaPlante, a soon to be sophomore at Yale, was able to display an impressive exchange of weight from his back leg forward. He had a big step with his front foot, but when he was able to get it down in time he had the ability to be ready for a fastball and adjust on an off-speed pitch. LaPlante ended up with an 0-3, but in his first at bat he was on two sliders that he pulled hard down the line before eventually flying out to deep right. He has the ability to hit to all fields even if that didn't equate to success today.

Meyer had the lone hit for North Fork, a single through the left side. He really should have had two as he lined a 2-0 fastball right at the second baseman. Meyer's approach to hitting was to get set in his load really early, so that he can recognize pitch and location. He proved to be successful in that he hit two balls hard and did not chase outside of the strike zone. Meyer will be heading into his sophomore season at Richmond in the fall.

David and Goliath

E.J. Cumbo and Ryan Ford are definitely different types of ball players to say the least. Cumbo, at 5'8", has probably been doubted his whole life and is now playing at Division 2 NYIT. Ford, on the other hand, is 6'2" and plays Big Ten baseball at Penn State. They do have similarities in that they're both lefthanded and they both play outfield, but the most important thing they have in common is that they both get the job done.

The best thing about E.J. Cumbo is his aggressiveness. In three of his four at bats he swung at the first pitch and, in total, he did not take one called strike in the game. At his size, Cumbo knows he needs a competitive advantage and this is how he gets just that. He realizes that every strike he takes would be a missed opportunity. He only put one first pitch in play and it was a line shot into the right center field gap. Cumbo also displayed incredible bat control in this one. He only had one at bat that was lefty vs lefty and he made it count. His upper half completely bailed on a breaking ball, but his hands were able to stay back enough to hook the ball into right center field for a base hit. Cumbo also executed a hit and run early in the game as he was able to hit a ground ball to third on a pitch that was nearly in the dirt.

Ryan Ford showed, in this game, why he is a Division 1 baseball player. He develops so much power in his load that when it's time to swing the ball flies off his bat. The sophomore displayed a silky, smooth swing path. Ford also proved that he loves the big spot. He finished 3-3, but 2 of the hits came with two outs and so did 3 of his 4 RBIs. Both clutch at bats were very different. In one, he fouled off a few two strike pitches before driving an off-speed pitch into the gap in right center. In the next, Ford jumped on a 1-0 fastball and smacked it just in front of the right fielder.

The combination of Cumbo and Ford near the top of the Westhampton lineup makes the Aviators a scary team to face going forward.