

## **A New Home for Hillsboro Hops Baseball Opens Its Gates for Opening Day**

On Tuesday, April 7th, the wait finally gave way for the Hillsboro Hops to play their first-ever game in their brand-new home, Hillsboro Hops Ballpark. Fans filtered in early, eagerly awaiting the first pitch as the Hops took on the Spokane Indians. The Indians took the game (one of the six-game series 7-3 over the Hops). Seven different Hillsboro hitters recorded a hit, with both teams finishing the night with eight apiece. The Hops will look to get their first win in the new ballpark with the second game of the series on Wednesday, April 8.

The Indians scored their first run off Hops' starter Kyle Ayers in the second inning. First basemen Kevin Fitzer hit a two-out double and was driven in on a single by left fielder Tommy Hopfe. Ayers allowed a two-out walk and then recorded a pop-out for the third out.

Ayers pitched four innings, only allowing one earned run on four hits, and recording three strikeouts. Sam Knowlton took over on the bump in the fifth inning. A leadoff walk, a wild pitch, and another walk loaded the bases for the Indians. A groundout recorded the first out of the inning, but a fielder's choice followed, putting Spokane up 2-0. A double play ended the inning before any further damage could be done.

In the bottom of the fifth, Hops' right fielder Trent Youngblood singled against Indians starter Evertt Catlett. Catlett struck out the next batter, but second baseman Yerald Nin doubled to score Youngblood and put the Hops on the board 2-1. Catlett gave up a walk, and Slade Caldwell grounded into a fielder's choice, scoring Nin and tying the game at 2-2. Caldwell was caught stealing to end the inning. That would be Catlett's last inning, as he struck out six batters over five innings, allowing two earned runs, four hits, and two walks.

Knowlton recorded a groundout to start the sixth but hit the next batter. A bunt single put runners on first and second. Knowlton struck out a batter for the second out, but a passed ball put both runners on in scoring position. A single by Indian's shortstop Tevin Tucker scored both runners to put Spokane up 4-2.

Rocco Reid had the ball for the Hops at the top of the seventh. He allowed a leadoff walk to centerfielder Caleb Hobson, who went on to steal second and third base. A groundout and a strikeout were the first two outs of the inning, but with a runner in scoring position, a wild pitch made it a 5-2 game. Reid struck out the next batter for the third out.

Reid threw two innings, allowed two walks, one earned run, and struck out two. Ricardo Yan entered the game in the ninth for the Hops. After allowing two walks to start it off, a single from Indians' right fielder Max Belyeu scored a run, but Belyeu was out at second on the play. A double from designated hitter Robert Calaz made it a 7-2 game.

For Spokane, Fisher Jameson pitched three innings, allowing only three hits and one walk. Tyler Hampu pitched the bottom of the ninth, with Hops designated hitter Avery Owusu-Asiedu leading the inning off with a single. Youngblood worked a walk, putting runners on first and second, who then both advanced to scoring position on a called balk. First baseman Modeifi Marte grounded out, but Osuwu-Asiedu scored on the play to make it 7-3. Nin struck out for the second out of the inning, and shortstop Wallace Clark and Slade Caldwell both drew walks, with Clark stealing second. A groundout ended the inning, with the Indians taking the 7-3 win over the Hops.

It was a historic night for the community, marking the opening of the first new stadium built in the Portland Metro area in over 30 years. The night started with a ribbon-cutting ceremony to open the gates as fans gathered in to sit in their seats for the first time. The night was filled with smiles and a promise of memorable games for years to come.

Game two of the series against the Spokane Indians will be played at Hillsboro Hops Ballpark on Wednesday, with first pitch scheduled for 6:35 PM. Pregame airtime is at 6:20 p.m. on Rip City Radio 620 AM and the BallyLive app.