



West Michigan Whitecaps Media Release

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For Immediate Release

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WHITECAPS FAN 20 IN RECORD-SETTING PERFORMANCE

COMSTOCK PARK, MI – Despite being knocked out of the playoff race the day before their final homestand of the year, the West Michigan Whitecaps still found a way to give their home crowd a night to remember at Fifth Third Ballpark on Saturday.

Marcelo Carreno and Slade Smith combined for a record-setting 20 strikeouts on Saturday night, leading the Whitecaps to a 7-1 win over the Dayton Dragons in the opener of a season-ending three-game series.

The 20 punch-outs by West Michigan (35-33, 71-67) were the most in a nine-inning game in the 19-year history of the franchise, and just one shy of the single-game record of 21 strikeouts registered during a 16-inning contest against Great Lakes on May 16 of this season. After notching just one 20-strikeout game through the first 18 seasons of Whitecaps' baseball, the 2012 squad has accomplished the feat twice.

Adding to the impressive performance on Saturday night was that Carreno and Smith racked up their 20 strikeouts without issuing a single walk.

The victory over Dayton (29-37, 59-77) also guaranteed the 'Caps of a winning record for the seventh time in the last eight years. A win in either of their last two ballgames of the season would clinch a plus-.500 finish in each half for West Michigan, who will not be one of the Midwest League's eight playoff teams despite owning the third-best record in the Eastern Division.

Carreno (9-8) came out firing darts early, striking out 13 batters and allowing just four hits over six scoreless innings to earn the win. The 21-year-old right-hander from Venezuela struck out the side twice, whiffed multiple batters in five of his six frames, and finished his outing with five straight punch-outs. In addition to setting a personal career-high and a Whitecaps' season-high, Carreno's 13 strikeouts were the most by a West Michigan pitcher since Duane Below racked up 14 punch-outs in a 2007 game against the Cedar Rapids Kernels.

The franchise record for strikeouts in a game is 15, established in 1998 by Alan Webb against the Beloit Snappers.

While Carreno was baffling the Dayton lineup, West Michigan was able to capitalize on shoddy Dragons' defense to blow the game open with a six-run outburst in the bottom of the second inning.

After three straight singles loaded the bases with one out, Dayton failed to convert two straight opportunities to turn inning-ending double plays. Gabriel Purroy and Chad Wright each sent bouncing balls to a middle infielder, but on both occasions the play was muffed and a run was enabled to cross the plate. With the bases still loaded and just one out, Eugenio Suarez advanced everybody 90 feet with a single to center and Jason Krizan drew a walk to force in a fourth run. Two batters later, Jason King capped the rally with a two-out single to center that plated a pair of runs for a 6-0 lead.

Colin Kaline added an RBI-single in the fifth that gave West Michigan a healthy 7-0 cushion as Smith came out of the bullpen for the final three innings.

The right-hander out of Auburn University picked up right where Carreno left off, striking out the side in the seventh to give the 'Caps a chance at franchise history. He added two more strikeouts in each the eighth and ninth frames, including a full-count pitch that caught Junior Arias looking for the second out of the ninth and the 20th strikeout of the night.

Smith (1) fanned seven batters over three innings of work, allowing one run on four hits to earn his first professional save.

The Whitecaps continue their final series of the regular season with the second game of a three-game set at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday afternoon at Fifth Third Ballpark against the Dayton Dragons. RHP Jeff Ferrell (6-5, 3.83) is scheduled to take the mound for West Michigan against RHP Robert Stephenson (2-3, 3.86) of Dayton in the final Helen DeVos Children's Hospital Family Day of the year. Group and individual tickets can be reserved by calling the Whitecaps front office at 616-784-4131 or visiting www.whitecapsbaseball.com.

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