



GAMEDAY INFO & NOTES

Game #66 | July 20, 2021 | PK Park | Eugene, OR

Eugene Emeralds (38-27) at Hillsboro Hops (28-36)

RHP Conner Nurse (1-5, 6.14 ERA) vs. LHP Blake Walston (0-1, 5.73 ERA)

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LAST TIME OUT

What a wild, wild series. Eugene wrapped up their final trip to Spokane this season in marathon fashion, a 4-hour and 42-minute 10-inning affair on Sunday that saw the Emeralds prevail in extras, 11-9. Eugene tallied 60 runs over the six-game series in Spokane, hitting double digits in five of six games. Heath Quinn belted 4 HRs and 12 RBIs to earn High-A West Player of the Week (see notes below). Eugene went 9-3 in Spokane in their two combined trips to Avista Stadium this season.

TONIGHT'S STORYLINES

The Ems and Hops meet at PK Park for the first time in nearly a month, with the Ems sweeping the six-game series spanning June 15-20. The Ems are 9-1 at PK Park against the Hops this season, and 12-6 vs. Hillsboro overall. In their last meeting (June 29 - July 4 at Hillsboro), the Ems and Hops split a six-game set with Eugene winning the first three and Hillsboro winning the last three. Hillsboro will send former first rounder Blake Walston to the mound, but Walston is still aiming to find his footing since arriving in the Northwest from Low-A Visalia on June 25. The lefty is 0-1 with a 5.73 ERA in three starts with the Hops, and in his only prior appearance against the Ems (6/30) he lasted just 1.2 IP while allowing 5 hits and 6 runs, only 2 of which were earned, though. Meanwhile, Eugene will send RHP Conner Nurse to the mound who is still searching to find his best form this season. Nurse has struggled surrendering the long ball, allowing 11 HRs in 12 starts this season.

QUICK HITS

Quinn Wins High-A West Player of the Week

Quinn put together a week to remember during the teams' recent six-game road series in Spokane, going 9-18 (.500) with 4 HRs, 12 RBIs, 8 runs scored and 3 walks while slugging 1.167 and posting a 1.758 OPS. The former highly touted San Francisco Giants prospect has fought tough-luck injuries over the past few seasons, and prior to this week Quinn had only played in eight games as an Emerald since joining the team on June 15 despite being healthy upon his arrival. However, his patience paid off this past week in the form of ample playing time and incredible on-field results, most notably highlighted by a two-homer, six-RBI performance this past Wednesday that included a grand slam. Quinn homered in each of the first three games of last week's series in Spokane, showcasing smooth power in every direction at Avista Stadium. He is the fifth Emerald to receive a High-A West weekly honor this season, joining INF Tyler Fitzgerald, OF Franklin Labour, OF Diego Rincones, RHP Caleb Kilian (2).

Tale Of Two Pitching Staffs

Collectively, Eugene starting pitchers are 13-25 with a 4.29 ERA. Meanwhile, Eugene's bullpen has gone an absurd 24-2 with a 4.29 ERA and 393 K's in 300.0 innings pitched. No other team in the Minor Leagues has fewer than 5 bullpen losses (Charleston RiverDogs). Eugene's 393 bullpen K's rank 3rd in all of High-A.

The Wright Stuff

No Marte? No Dabo? No problem. Wright has slid into the closer role seamlessly after prior Emeralds closers Jose Marte and RJ Dabovich each received promotions to Double-A Richmond. In 26.0 innings pitched this season between Low-A San Jose and High-A Eugene, Wright has struck out an astounding 49 batters while going 9-for-9 in save opportunities.

Strikeout Savants

Through 65 games, the Eugene pitching staff leads the High-A West in strikeouts (714). Their 714 collective strikeouts are 16 more than the next closest High-A West team (Everett - 714). But it doesn't stop there... the Emeralds ranked 2nd in all of High-A, too, trailing only the Hudson Valley Renegades (NYY). Across all of Minor League Baseball, Eugene's 714 K's rank 9th. Coincidentally, the San Jose Giants (San Francisco - Low A) lead all of Minor League Baseball with 822 K's. Entering Wednesday night, San Jose's 822 K's are 60 more than the next closest team (Modesto Nuts | SEA | Low-A West).

Living On The Edge

After falling in extra innings to the Tri-City Dust Devils, 7-6, on May 20, the Emeralds have won ten straight games decided by one run and are now 11-1 in one-run games.

The Clutch (E)Gene

Eugene has been one of the best teams hitting with two outs in all of High-A. Eugene ranks 2nd in AVG (.258), 3rd in runs (172), 2nd in hits (186), 2nd on OBP (.367) and 3rd in OPS (.805) when hitting with two outs. It doesn't stop there, though. Eugene has come up big in late/close situations (definition below). Eugene leads all of High-A in AVG (.283), OBP (.416), SLG (.512), and OPS (.928) while ranking 2nd in runs scored (45)

in late/close situations.

The pitching staff has been just as good, too. In late/close situations, the Eugene ranks 1st in High-A in ERA (2.54) and opponent's average (.164).

Late/close definition per MLB.com: Late-inning pressure situations are defined as any at-bat in the seventh inning or later where the batter's team trails by three runs or fewer, is tied or is ahead by only one run. If the bases are loaded and the batting team trails by four runs, this also counts as a late-inning pressure situation.

Around The Affiliates

- Low-A San Jose entered this week's series fresh off sweeping the Modesto Nuts, and tonight they kick off a 12-game homestand. Of note: An experimental rule in Low-A West this season has been the use of a pitch clock (enforced starting on 6/8). San Jose's average time of game before pitch clock (first 30 games): 2:52. San Jose's average TOG with clock (36 games): 2:38. SJ has played 21 straight sub-3 hour games (Eugene is fresh off a 4:42 hour, 10-inning game on Sunday in Spokane).

- Double-A Richmond has won 11 of their last 15 games. They are tied for third place in the six-team Double-A Northeast Southwest Division, 2.5 games behind first-place Akron. Over the last 12 games since July 6, the Flying Squirrels have hit 22 home runs, which is the most in the Double-A Northeast. Vince Fernandez has hit six homers in his 11 games played during that stretch. Heliot Ramos has hit four homers in that span. Sandro Fabian, Diego Rincones and Frankie Tostado each have two homers. Andres Angulo, Brandon Martorano, Andy Sugilio, David Villar, Simon Whiteman and Will Wilson have each hit one homer in that span. Over his last 11 games since July 4, Heliot Ramos is batting .310 (13-for-42) with five homers, four doubles and 11 RBIs while scoring 11 runs. Last Thursday, he hit a 448-foot homer over the batters' eye in center field at The Diamond. In his last 14 games since June 30, Vince Fernandez is batting .432 (19-for-44) with six home runs, two doubles and 17 RBIs. Fernandez is ranked first on the team with 12 homers this season and second with 33 RBIs. He has homered three times in the last five games. Diego Rincones hit his first Double-A home run on Saturday against Somerset, a three-run shot in the second inning that tied the game, 3-3, in a 7-3 Flying Squirrels win. He followed with a two-run, go-ahead homer in the bottom of the eighth inning in the series finale against Somerset on Sunday night in an 8-7 win. Rincones has picked up seven RBIs in his last four games dating back to last Wednesday.

SF Giants Prospect Watch

Per MLB.com, the Emeralds boast 5 of the organization's top 30 prospects, 4 of which are active:

- #4 OF Hunter Bishop (LL)
- #5 LHP Seth Corry
- #17 1B Logan Wyatt
- #18 RHP Kai-Wei Teng
- #28 C Ricardo Genoves

EMS BY THE NUMBERS

Overall	38-27
Home*	17-13
Road	21-14
Neutral	0-0
Day	3-1
Night	35-26
Runs Scored	364
Runs Against	359
Run Differential	+5
Team AVG	.242
Team ERA	5.11
HR for/against	73/63
Strikeouts (pitching)	714
Strikeouts (hitting)	637
Current Streak	W2
Longest W Streak	W8
Longest L Streak	L5
Extra Innings	3-1
Shutouts	2-1
1-Run Games	11-1
May	15-9
June	17-8
July	5-10
August	0-0
September	0-0
Scoring First	26-9
Opponent Scores First	12-18
Monday	0-2
Tuesday	9-1
Wednesday	6-4
Thursday	5-6
Friday	6-5
Saturday	5-6
Sunday	7-3
vs. Everett	1-5
vs. Hillsboro*	9-3
vs. Spokane	3-3
vs. Tri-City	0-0
vs. Vancouver	4-2
at Everett	1-4
at Hillsboro	3-3
at Spokane	9-3
at Tri-City	4-2
at Vancouver	4-2
Series Openers	10-1
Series Finales	7-4

Arizona Diamondbacks Prospect Watch

The Hops boast 5 of the Arizona Diamondbacks top 30 prospects:

- #5 LHP Blake Walston
- #6 RHP Slade Ceconi
- #16 2B/SS Blaze Alexander
- #24 RHP Drey Jameson
- #26 3B/OF Tristin English

Olympic Ems

Diego Rincones and the Venezuelan National Team's bid to make the Olympics came up just short on Saturday, with Venezuela falling to the Dominican Republic, 8-5, in the WBSC Baseball Final Qualifier held in Mexico. Rincones made his mark in the Final Qualifier, belting a three-run homer in the 2nd inning to put Venezuela up 3-0 at the time but a six-run 4th inning, helped the Dominican Republic roar back and hold on late for the win. During the Final Qualifier, Rincones went 3-for-14 (.214) with 5 RBI, a double, and a HR in 4 games played. Rincones and two of his current teammates - RHP Jasier Herrera and OF Ismael Munguia - also each recently competed in the Olympic Qualifying Tournament held in Florida:

- Herrera (Columbia): 1 APP (vs. Venezuela) | 2.0 IP, 1 H, 1 BB, 0 R, 0 K
- Munguia (Nicaragua): 3 games | 6-for-12 (.500), 1 2B, 2 R. Led team in AVG.

- Rincones (Venezuela): 5 games | 4-for-19 (.211), 1 2B, 1 HR, 2 R | Hit walk-off HR vs. Columbia in bottom of 9th.

. Rincones later suited up for the Venezuelan National Team during the WBSC Final Qualifier held in Mexico. The barrel-chested outfielder made his mark in both stints with the Venezuelan National Team, including a walk-off homer against Columbia in Florida and later a three-run homer against the Dominican Republic in the championship game of the Final Qualifier, a game that Venezuela would go on to lose, 8-5, to just miss out on qualifying for the Tokyo Olympics.

Olympic News and Notes

The Opening Round of the Olympics kicks off next week with the following matchups (all times PST):

- 7/28: Dominican Republic vs. Japan (8pm)
- 7/29: Israel vs. South Korea (3am)
- 7/30: Mexico vs. Dominican Republic (8pm)
- 7/30: USA vs. Israel (3am)
- 7/31: Japan vs. Mexico (8pm)
- 7/31: USA vs. South Korea (3am)

Outfielder Julio Rodriguez, who played for the Everett AquaSox earlier this season, will be suiting up for the Dominican Republic. Fellow former AquaSox outfielder Patrick Kivlehan (2021) will be playing for Team USA, as will former Oregon Duck pitcher Scott McGough, who, coincidentally is married to former Emeralds intern, Lauren McGough (formerly Thompson).

HIGH-A WEST STANDINGS

	W	L	PCT.	GB	RF	RA
Everett	42	22	.656	-	460	283
Eugene	38	27	.585	4.5	364	359
Vancouver	32	34	.485	11.0	327	343
Spokane	30	36	.455	13.0	324	344
Hillsboro	28	36	.438	14.0	273	317
Tri-City	25	40	.385	17.5	263	365

TODAY'S PROBABLE STARTERS

#35 Conner Nurse (RHP)

Height: 6'6 Weight: 210 lbs Acquired: Round 34, 1026th (2017)
 Hometown: Winter Garden, FL School: Ridge HS (FL)
 Born: July 31, 1999 (21)

throughout. Primary righthanded pitcher, steady tempo to delivery throughout, shows balance and ability to repeat, leading to lots of strikes. Medium arm stroke through the back, work to a near over-the-top release point, does a nice job of working on top of the ball to generate nice angle on fastball. Topped out at 90 mph, mostly true in life, tough pitch to elevate due to plane. Curveball shows hammer depth at 79 mph from similar release point, present strikeout pitch and will manipulate shape/velocity to pitch early in count. Has confidence and feel in his changeup, occasional hard fading life at 74 mph, projects with additional arm speed. Nice feel for a full arsenal and throws off speed pitches for strikes regularly. Righthanded hitter, wide base in the box with a short and inside swing path. Looks to lift and pull the ball, can turn on inner half pitch and flashes pop off the barrel. Named to World Showcase Top Prospect List. Good student. Committed to Seminole State College of Florida."

PITCHES: 4-Seam Fastball, 2-Seam Fastball, Cutter, Slider, Splitter

BIO: Signed for \$250,000, \$125,000 over slot. Did not pitch during the 2017 season due to a right rotator cuff strain. Did not pitch during the 2017 season due to a right rotator cuff straign. Just 21-years old, Nurse is pitching in his first full season of pro ball after spending 2018 in Rookie-ball down in Arizona, then splitting time between Arizona and the short-season Northwest league in 2019. Per Perfect Game coming out of high school: "Extra-large, athletic frame with broad shoulders and long limbs, leaner build with room to fill but also has present strength throughout. Primary righthanded pitcher, steady tempo to delivery throughout, shows balance and ability to repeat, leading to lots of strikes. Medium arm stroke through the back, work to a near over-the-top release point, does a nice job of working on top of the ball to generate nice angle on fastball. Topped out at 90 mph, mostly true in life, tough pitch to elevate due to plane. Curveball shows hammer depth at 79 mph from similar release point, present strikeout pitch and will manipulate shape/velocity to pitch early in count. Has confidence and feel in his changeup, occasional hard fading life at 74 mph, projects with additional arm speed. Nice feel for a full arsenal and throws off speed pitches for strikes regularly. Righthanded hitter, wide base in the box with a short and inside swing path. Looks to lift and pull the ball, can turn on inner half pitch and flashes pop off the barrel. Named to World Showcase Top Prospect List. Good student. Committed to Seminole State College of Florida."

W	L	ERA	G	GS	CG	SHO	SV	SVO	IP	H	R	ER	HR	HB	BB	IBB	K	AVG	WP
1	5	6.14	12	12	0	0	0	0	55.2	63	41	38	11	1	29	0	52	.286	2

#34 Blake Walston (LHP)

Height: 6'1 Weight: 175 lbs Acquired: Round 1, 26th (2019)
 Hometown: Wilmington, NC School: New Hanover HS
 Born: June 28, 2001 (20)

2h, 1r, 1er, 0bb, 11k), then joined Hops on 8/21/19 for stretch run and postseason (3gs in reg seas, 0-0, 3.00, 6ip, 6h, 2r, 2er, 2bb, 6k). 1 app. for Hops in 2019 postseason: was starter in G2 of NWL Championship Series against Tri-City; faced just 5 batters, allowing a single, back-to-back walks to load the bases, getting a strikeout and hitting a batter before being lifted; he would allow 4 runs (all earned); later in the inning T-C's Johnny Homza hit a grand slam and T-C scored six in the first en route to a 9-1 win. 2019 as a SR at New Hanover High School (Wilmington, NC): 12-0, 0.20, 68.2ip, 129k, was North Carolina's Gatorade Player of the Year, led New Hanover to back-to-back state titles (and also won one in football) Had been committed to pitch for: North Carolina State U. Bonus: \$2.45 million. Wasn't a regular on the high school showcase circuit: in part because he was a high school quarterback. Starred as a left-handed QB at New Hanover HS: as a junior in 2017, he led the state with 4,340 passing yards, and led New Hanover to a state title. Brother Garrett: a sixth-yr senior tight end at U North Carolina in 2021; made 11 starts in 2020, had 19 catches for 255y including 2 TDs; caught UNC's first TD of the year vs Syracuse. Blake thought about accepting an offer to play college football: "I thought about it. I had an opportunity from a couple of schools. I just decided baseball is probably a little easier on the body." Also from New Hanover HS: Trot Nixon, selected by the Red Sox with the 7th pick of the 1st round in 1993. Full name: Matthew Blake Walston Pitches: fastball (93-97), curve (77-79), slider, change-up

PITCHES: Fastball, Curveball, Slider, Changeup

Notes: Joined Hops on June 28th One of youngest players in league: turned 20 on June 28th, the day he joined Hops. MLBpipeline.com #5 prospect for D-backs: and #1 pitcher. Began season with Low-A Visalia: 8g (all starts), 2-2, 3.32, 43.1ip, 34h, 17bb, 60k, 4hr, 0hb, 6wp. Longest outing this year at Low-A: 6.2 ip in best start as pro, 6/16 at Rancho Cucamonga, 3h, 0r, 2bb, 8k 2020 at D-backs Alternate Site and Instructional Lg: did well at Alt Site as a 19-year-old against much older competition. Pro debut season right out of HS in 2019: started in AZL (3g, 2 starts, 5ip, reg seas, 0-0, 3.00, 6ip, 6h, 2r, 2er, 2bb, 6k). 1 app. for Hops in 2019 postseason: was starter in G2 of NWL Championship Series against Tri-City; faced just 5 batters, allowing a single, back-to-back walks to load the bases, getting a strikeout and hitting a batter before being lifted; he would allow 4 runs (all earned); later in the inning T-C's Johnny Homza hit a grand slam and T-C scored six in the first en route to a 9-1 win. 2019 as a SR at New Hanover High School (Wilmington, NC): 12-0, 0.20, 68.2ip, 129k, was North Carolina's Gatorade Player of the Year, led New Hanover to back-to-back state titles (and also won one in football) Had been committed to pitch for: North Carolina State U. Bonus: \$2.45 million. Wasn't a regular on the high school showcase circuit: in part because he was a high school quarterback. Starred as a left-handed QB at New Hanover HS: as a junior in 2017, he led the state with 4,340 passing yards, and led New Hanover to a state title. Brother Garrett: a sixth-yr senior tight end at U North Carolina in 2021; made 11 starts in 2020, had 19 catches for 255y including 2 TDs; caught UNC's first TD of the year vs Syracuse. Blake thought about accepting an offer to play college football: "I thought about it. I had an opportunity from a couple of schools. I just decided baseball is probably a little easier on the body." Also from New Hanover HS: Trot Nixon, selected by the Red Sox with the 7th pick of the 1st round in 1993. Full name: Matthew Blake Walston Pitches: fastball (93-97), curve (77-79), slider, change-up

W	L	ERA	G	GS	CG	SHO	SV	SVO	IP	H	R	ER	HR	HB	BB	IBB	K	AVG	WP
0	1	5.73	3	3	0	0	0	0	11.0	16	11	7	4	1	7	0	17	.333	2

UPCOMING SCHEDULE & PROBABLE PITCHING MATCHUPS

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	EMERALDS STARTER	OPPONENT STARTER
Wednesday, July 21	7:05pm PST	Hillsboro Hops	RHP Kai-Wei Teng	RHP Brandon Pfaadt
Thursday, July 22	7:05pm PST	Hillsboro Hops	RHP Nick Avila	RHP Slade Seconi
Friday, July 23	7:05pm PST	Hillsboro Hops	LHP Seth Corry	RHP Justin Vernia
Saturday, July 24	7:05pm PST	Hillsboro Hops	RHP Aaron Phillips	RHP Drey Jameson
Sunday, July 25	5:05pm PST	Hillsboro Hops	RHP Conner Nurse	LHP Blake Walston
Tuesday, July 27	7:05pm PST	@ Everett AquaSox	RHP Kai-Wei Teng	TBD