



SALEM RIDGEYAKS

SINGLE-A AFFILIATE OF THE BOSTON RED SOX



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RidgeYaks Win First Game on Opening Day 5-4 in Nail-biter Over Delmarva

SALEM Va. – The Salem RidgeYaks (1-0) opened a new era Thursday night with a 5-4 victory over the Delmarva Shorebirds (0-1) to win their first game in RidgeYaks identity history at Carilion Clinic Field at Salem Memorial Ballpark.

After 16 years of being known as the Salem Red Sox, the team underwent a rebrand in November, introducing the Salem RidgeYaks. After months of excitement and anticipation, the wait is over, and the Yaks start the year 1-0.

The Yaks used a blend of new talent and returners to get the job done. On the hill, 21-year-old Dylan Brown out of Old Dominion University, who was selected in the eighth round by Boston in last summer's MLB draft, made his professional debut as the starting pitcher. The southpaw went five innings scoreless, allowing just two hits with six strikeouts. That performance was good enough to earn his first professional win.

Salem's offense got going early in the bottom of the first, using a Starlyn Nunez leadoff walk, a groundout, a stolen base and a ball in play from Skylar King to squeeze across the first run of the season.

The top of the lineup produced again in the third when Ilan Fernandez walked to flip the lineup back to Nunez. Facing Shorebirds starter Kiefer Lord, Nunez singled, Eddy Azocar ripped an RBI single down the right-field line, and King added a pair of runs on a two-run double to right field. The RidgeYaks took a 4-0 lead after three innings.

Salem tacked on its final run of the game when King added another RBI double to right field, scoring Luke Heyman from first base. The former West Virginia Mountaineer finished 2-for-4 with three RBIs.

The Shorebirds got the bats going in the sixth inning against bullpen arm Patrick Galle. Cobb Hightower singled to bring home a run in the frame and cut the deficit to 5-1.

Galle tossed two innings, allowing one run on two hits with one strikeout.

The majority of Delmarva's damage came in the eighth and ninth innings against Gilbel Galvan, who tried to close the door.





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In the top of the eighth, Maikol Hernandez led off with a walk, Félix Amparo singled, and Braylon Whitaker delivered a sacrifice fly to make it 5-2. Hightower followed with an RBI for his second of the season.

Entering the ninth, Salem led 5-3. Galvan recorded the first out before Andrés Nolaya reached on an error by shortstop Avinson Pinto. Nolaya was caught stealing second base for the second out of the inning.

Down to its final out, Junior Aybar doubled to bring the tying run to the plate. Hernandez singled to make it 5-4 before Amparo lined out to strand the tying run on first and give the Yaks the victory.

Brown (1-0) earned the win, while Lord (0-1) went 4 1/3 innings, allowing four runs in the loss.

The Salem RidgeYaks return to action Friday night, April 3, when they host the Delmarva Shorebirds in game two of the three-game opening series. The Yaks will look to win the opening series for the second straight year on the first Fireworks Friday, presented by GloFiber, of the season. First pitch is scheduled for 6:35 p.m. ET at Carilion Clinic Field at Salem Memorial Ballpark. Right-hander Madinson Frias will make the start against Denton Biller for Delmarva.

GAME NOTES:

- The RidgeYaks won their first game in identity history.
- Salem has won back-to-back Opening Day games for the first time since 2018-19.
- Dylan Brown went five innings scoreless, marking the second consecutive season that Salem's Opening Day starter has gone at least five innings scoreless.
- Skylar King's three RBIs tie his career high, set Sept. 6, 2025, against Fayetteville.
- Over King's last four games with Salem (including the end of last season), he is 6-for-17 (.353) with eight RBIs and three extra-base hits.
- Ilan Fernandez set a career high with three walks and recorded his first Single-A hit.
- Five of Salem's eight hits came from the top four in the lineup (Nunez, Azocar, Heyman and King).
- The top four in the lineup went 5-for-16, while the eight and nine hitters (Ortiz and Fernandez) went 3-for-5 (.600).
- After averaging 0.92 stolen bases per game over the first 109 games last season, Salem stole four bases on Opening Night in 2026.

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