



# SALEM RIDGEYAKS

SINGLE-A AFFILIATE OF THE BOSTON RED SOX



For Immediate Release:  
May 30, 2026

Braden Schenck  
bschenck@ridgeyaks.com

## RidgeYaks Ride Nunez's Two-Homer Night to 5-1 Victory Over Hickory

SALEM, Va. – Starlyn Nunez delivered the biggest offensive performance of the season for Salem, blasting two home runs and driving in two runs as the Salem RidgeYaks (22-28) defeated the Hickory Crawdads (28-20), 5-1 on Saturday night at Carilion Clinic Field.

Leighton Finley worked through early trouble for the RidgeYaks. The starter hit Paulino Santana on the very first pitch of the game before issuing walks to Hector Osorio and Yolfran Castillo to load the bases with no outs in the first inning.

Hickory capitalized when Josh Springer lined an RBI single to center field, scoring Santana and giving the Crawdads a 1-0 lead.

After the RBI knock, Finley settled in and struck out the next two batters to escape the inning with minimal damage.

Salem's offense wasted little time responding.

Leading off the bottom of the first, Nunez launched a solo home run to right-center field on the first pitch he saw from Hickory starter AJ Russell, tying the game at 1-1. The blast was Nunez's sixth home run of the season and immediately erased the early deficit.

The RidgeYaks grabbed the lead for good an inning later. Avinson Pinto reached on a leadoff walk and eventually scored when Ilan Fernandez bounced an RBI single through the left side, giving Salem a 2-1 advantage in the second.

The pitching staff took over from there.

Finley settled in after the opening frame and turned in one of his best outings of the season. The right-hander allowed just one run on four hits across five innings while striking out seven to earn his third win of the year. Finley retired 12 of the final 15 batters he faced and held Hickory scoreless over his final four innings.

Salem added another run in the fourth. Adonys Guzman crossed the plate on Givian Sirvania's RBI single to left field, extending the lead to 3-1. The inning ended dramatically when left fielder Paulino Santana threw out D'Angelo Ortiz attempting to score from second, preserving the two-run cushion.

Nunez struck again in the fifth inning.





# SALEM RIDGEYAKS

SINGLE-A AFFILIATE OF THE BOSTON RED SOX



With nobody out in the frame, the center fielder crushed his second solo homer of the night, another drive to right-center field, on the first pitch he saw from reliever Jormy Nivar. The blast marked Nunez's seventh home run of the season and pushed Salem's lead to 4-1.

The RidgeYaks added their final run in the seventh when Guzman lined an RBI single to left field, bringing home Nunez after his third hit of the game.

Nunez finished 3-for-4 with three runs scored, two home runs, and two RBIs, accounting for much of Salem's offense. Fernandez, Guzman, Sirvania, Ortiz, Stanley Tucker, and Kleyver Salazar each contributed a hit as the RidgeYaks collected 10 hits overall.

Out of the bullpen, Joey Gartrell was dominant, tossing three scoreless innings while allowing just two hits and striking out two. Gartrell retired six consecutive batters from the sixth through the eighth inning, preserving the lead. Jay Allmer closed the door with a scoreless ninth, as Finley, Gartrell, and Allmer combined to hold the Crawdads to just six hits and one run.

Hickory managed only two hits after the fifth inning and finished 1-for-5 with runners in scoring position while striking out 10 times.

The RidgeYaks will look to carry the momentum into Sunday's series finale against the Crawdads at Carilion Clinic Field. First pitch is scheduled for 4:05 p.m. as Salem looks to earn a split of the six-game series. Right-hander Jacob Mayers is slated to start against Hickory's Evan Siary.

## Game Notes:

- Starlyn Nunez's two-home run game marked the second multi-homer game of both his season and career (April 30 at Wilson)
- Nunez now has seven home runs, overtaking Eddy Azocar and Luke Heyman for sole possession of the team lead
- Nunez's leadoff homer in the first inning was his second leadoff home run of the season and first since April 17 at Hickory
- Salem's five runs and 10 hits were both single-game highs in the series
- Stanley Tucker went 1-for-4 and continued his hot stretch. Since May 15, Tucker is batting .370 (10-for-27) with two home runs and seven RBIs over his last eight games
- Finley completed at least five innings for the fifth consecutive start
- Finley improved to 3-0 at home this season and lowered his home ERA to 1.89
- Since May 3, Finley has allowed just two earned runs over his last four starts (20 innings pitched)
- Salem snapped a three-game losing streak
- Eight Salem hitters recorded a hit, while all nine reached base safely in the victory
- Salem's pitching staff held an opponent to one run or fewer in a nine-inning game for the first time since May 13 at Fredericksburg. It was the fourth time this season Salem has allowed one run or fewer

