

## **Nine feels pretty fine to Spinners**

By Sam Feeley

*This article appeared in the June 26, 2016 edition of the Lowell Sun.*

LOWELL -- The Lowell Spinners continue to be the hottest team in Minor League Baseball.

Not the New York-Penn League. Not Single A. The entire minor leagues.

Although they had to shake off a rough top of the first to do so, the Spinners put on their best offensive performance of the young season in a 9-3 victory over the Tri-City ValleyCats on Saturday night in front of 4,872 fans at LeLacheur Park.

It was the Spinners' ninth consecutive win to start the season, the longest active winning streak in all of the minors.

After Kevin Steen (4 IP, 3 H, 3R, 4 BB, 4 K) surrendered two runs on two hits, two walks and two errors in the top of the first, the Spinners exploded in the bottom of the first with seven runs on seven hits. In doing so, they chased ValleyCats starter Carlos Sierra after just two-thirds of an inning.

The big blows came from the bottom two batters in the lineup, as first baseman Tucker Tubbs doubled home two and shortstop Carlos Tovar (2-for-4) cranked a first-pitch two-run homer to left, the first home run of the season for the Spinners.

"The way we've been rolling, we haven't even gotten to hit yet," Spinners manager Iggy Suarez said. "Putting a seven-spot in the first, especially with how that top half went, I'm not going to count these guys out, even with the way it started. As soon as they came in and got ready to hit, that energy changed."

"I don't think anybody started freaking out after a 2-0 deficit in the first inning," Tubbs said. "We knew we were going to get our chances and come back."

After Tri-City (3-6) got a run back in the top of the second, both teams' bats went fairly quiet until the bottom of the eighth when Tubbs stepped up to the plate and drove a two-run homer to left-center.

He finished the day 3-for-4 with four RBIs and a triple short of the cycle.

"He's been having some good at-bats and it was only a matter of time before he would explode that way," Suarez said of Tubbs.

"It feels good to help out your team," Tubbs said. "Other guys have been getting it done before today and I was able to get the RBIs up there today."

Brad Stone (2-0) got the win in relief of Steen and Kuehl McEachern got a 10-out save after pitching out of a bases-loaded jam in the top of the sixth.

"We've won a bunch of 2-1 games and low-scoring games and the pitchers have really held us in there, but tonight we were really able to swing it and get a lot of runs across," Tubbs said

When a team is undefeated this deep into a season, there is the risk for players to tense up to avoid making that one mistake that breaks the streak. But Tubbs isn't worried about that.

"I think everyone's staying pretty loose," he said. "It's a long season, but obviously no one wants to lose ... no one's playing too tense."

Tyler Hill (2-for-4, double, 1 RBI) and Roldani Baldwin (2-for-3, double, triple, 1 RBI) also had big games for the Spinners.

The Spinners can move to 10-0 by besting Tri-City on Sunday (5 p.m.).