

Bautista's HRs lift Fisher Cats



New Hampshire Fisher Cats Jose Bautista fights off a pitch on his first at-bat vs. the New Britain Rock Cats Thursday at Northeast Delta Dental Stadium in Manchester. Bautista is here on a rehab assignment. Mark Bolton/Union Leader

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By KEVIN GRAY

New Hampshire Union Leader

MANCHESTER — Jose Bautista, baseball's reigning home run champion, blasted a grand slam and added a solo homer as the Fisher Cats opened their final homestand with a 9-6 thumping of New Britain on Thursday night.

Toronto's three-time All-Star played a one-game rehab stint for New Hampshire, sparking the team with missile-like homers before 5,385 fans at Northeast Delta Dental Stadium. Bautista plans to join the Blue Jays today in Baltimore.

He's feeling pretty good.

"I had some good swings today. I got myself into some good hitters' counts, and they missed with some pitches," said Bautista, who deemed himself fully recovered from a left wrist injury. "As of right now, I feel great. These injuries can be weird. Sometimes you wake up feeling sore, but I don't expect that to happen."

Bautista went deep against New Britain righty Steve Hirschfeld (8-8) in the fourth inning, belting a grand slam off the Hilton Garden Inn. In the eighth, he jumped on an Edgar Ibarra fastball, launching a solo homer over the Samuel Adams Bar & Grille.

In the fifth, New Hampshire hit back-to-back-to-back jacks for a 9-5 lead. Brad Glenn, Ryan Goins and Ryan Schimpf tied a franchise record with three consecutive homers. Glenn leads the team with 18 homers.

Blue Jays slugger Adam Lind, also joining the Fisher Cats on a rehab assignment (back), went 1-for-4 with three strikeouts. Bautista went 2-for-4 with a walk.

Fisher Cats starter Ryan Tepera went four innings, yielding four runs on six hits, and Michael Dubee (4-4) picked up the win after working the fifth. Trystan Magnuson earned his fourth save by pitching a perfect ninth inning.