

A.L. All-Stars victorious again

Crawford, Jones keys in victory

by Donal Ware

HBCSports Press Association

ST. LOUIS – For the past seven seasons the MLB All-Star Game has been more than just some of MLB’s best players playing an exhibition game. The game has meaning and home field advantage is awarded to the winner of the mid-summer classic between the American and National Leagues All-Stars in the World Series.

For the 12th time in the last 13 meetings – less a 7-7 11-inning tie in 2002 – the A.L. wins in another close game 4-3 before a sellout crowd of 46,760. Tampa Bay Rays outfielder Carl Crawford was named the games most valuable player after going 1-for-3 and robbing Brad Hawpe of the Colorado Rockies of a potential go-ahead homerun with game tied at 3-3 in the seventh inning.

“He hit it pretty good off the bat and I didn’t think it was going to carry that far, but it carried and I just tried to find the wall and was able to jump up and make a play on it,” said Crawford. “I was over the wall. Yeah, it would have been a homerun.”

In the top of the eighth Detroit’s Curtis Granderson led off the inning with a triple. Baltimore’s Adam Jones was able to drive Granderson in on a long fly out to right field. The RBI for Jones proved to be the game-winner.

“I was just going up there to put the ball in play not trying to do too much,” said Jones. “I was fortunate enough to get a ball in play. Striking out wasn’t an option right there.”

The A.L. All-Stars jumped out to an early first-inning lead in part because of an error by the game’s unofficial ambassador Albert Pujols. Ichiro Suzuki led the game off with a single and Derek Jeter was hit by a pitch. After Ichiro was forced out at third on a Joe Mauer ground out, Pujols’ error scored Jeter. Josh Hamilton grounded out, but Mauer scored giving the A.L the 2-0 lead.

But the Seniors would come right back in their bottom half of the second. After starting pitcher Roy Halladay retired the first two batters, David Wright and Shane Victorino singled back-to-back. The Cardinals Yadier Molina brought the home crowd to its feet with a single that scored Wright and a throwing error by Hamilton scored Victorino tying the game at 2-2. Prince Fielder, who won the homerun derby the night before, pinch-hit for pitcher Tim Lincecum and hit a screaming ground-ruled double down the left field line which scored Molina and the N.L. All-Stars led 3-2.

In the fifth inning, Mauer, the league’s premier hitter with a .373 average, hit an RBI-double that scored Jeter as the Juniors tied the game at 3-3.

Drama unfolded in the 8th inning as with two outs Adrian Gonzales walked and Orlando Hudson singled off Jason Bartlett's glove to put runners at 1st and 3rd. Ryan Howard came in as a pinch hitter and after a battle with one of the A.L.'s premiere relievers in Joe Nathan, struck out on a 2-2 slider in the dirt. The game's best reliever over the last decade Mariano Rivera retired the three batters he faced in the bottom of the 9th preserving the A.L. victory.