

Elon Takes Two From ASU

Written by Mike Flynn
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A furious comeback in the nightcap fell just short as Appalachian State University baseball dropped both ends of a doubleheader to visiting Elon on Saturday at Beaver Field at Jim and Bettie Smith Stadium. Appalachian lost the opener, 10-4, and fell 5-4 in game two.

After Elon (11-5, 2-0 SoCon) turned a close game into a rout with five runs in the final two innings of game one, Appalachian (8-7, 0-5 SoCon) rallied late to nearly earn a comeback win in the nightcap.

Trailing 5-0 after four-and-a-half innings of the second game, ASU scored a run in the sixth inning and three more in the seventh to cut the deficit to 5-4. Back-to-back singles by Tyler Zupcic (Charlotte, N.C./Providence) and Jack Myers (Charlotte, N.C./Myers Park) put the tying and winning runs on base with one out in the bottom of the ninth but catcher Jeremy Dowdy (Raleigh, N.C./Wakefield), who had three hits in his first seven at-bats of the afternoon, grounded into a game-ending double play.

An early deficit haunted the Mountaineers in the first ballgame too, as Elon led 3-0 after one-and-a-half innings. Much like the nightcap, Appalachian battled back from the early deficit to cut the Elon lead to one run. However, after ASU rallied to cut the Phoenix lead to 5-4 in the seventh inning, Elon answered with three runs in the eighth and two in the ninth to put the game out of reach.

Besides Dowdy, who went 3-for-8 over the twinbill with an RBI in the first game and a double in the second, the Mountaineers were led offensively by Myers, who had five hits in two ballgames (2-for-4 in game one and 3-for-4 in game two). Zupcic scored two runs and drove in another in the opener and added two hits, an RBI and a run scored in the nightcap. Freshman Lawrence Pardo (Miami, Fla./Christopher Columbus) had a career-best 3-for-4 effort with a double in game one.

Appalachian's starting pitchers — Nathan Hyatt (Brevard, N.C./Brevard) and Pardo — labored through six innings apiece, with both surrendering five runs (although one of Hyatt's was unearned). However, relievers Tyler Jackson (Jonesville, N.C./Starmount) and Ryan Arrowood (Rutherfordton, N.C./Central) were integral to the ASU rally in game two, as the duo combined for three innings of one-hit relief.

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Elon was led by shortstop Neal Pritchard (3-for-4, triple, RBI, run) in the opener and left fielder Jake Luce (2-for-3, double, triple, RBI, run) in the nightcap. The Phoenix banged out five triples in the doubleheader while the teams combined to turn eight double plays (five by ASU, three by Elon).

ASU will look to salvage a win in the three-game series when the teams meet on Sunday at 1 p.m. at Smith Stadium.