Written by Mike Flynn
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Appalachian State University baseball closed another terrific April in style with a 6-1 win over North Carolina A&T on Wednesday evening at Beaver Field at Jim and Bettie Smith Stadium.

With the victory, Appalachian (26-18) finished the month with a 14-5 record, upping its mark in April since 2009 to a sterling 48-9 (.842).

Despite drawing 14 walks and stealing seven bases while getting strong efforts from four pitchers, ASU was never able to truly pull away from N.C. A&T (14-27), due mainly to leaving a whopping 14 men on base in the triumph.

The Mountaineers led 5-1 after five innings but the damage could have been far worse as they stranded 12 baserunners in the first five stanzas alone. The Aggies issued 12 walks and threw three wild pitches before the end of the fifth inning while only 40 of their first 104 pitches found the strike zone.

Appalachian, on the other hand, rode solid pitching to the victory. With an impending seven-day break for final exams, ASU used Wednesday's contest to get work for its marquee arms, sending weekend starters Ryan Arrowood (Rutherfordton, N.C./Central), Nathan Hyatt (Brevard, N.C./Brevard) and Seth Grant (Etowah, N.C./West Henderson) and closer Taylor Miller (Raleigh, N.C./Wakefield) to the mound. The foursome combined to limit A&T, which came into the contest hitting .297 as a team and averaging 6.3 runs per game, to just one run on six hits.

The turning point of the ballgame came in the fourth when N.C. A&T strung together four-consecutive singles off Arrowood. With the bases loaded and ASU clinging to a 2-0 lead, A&T's Luke Tendler slapped the last of the four-straight hits through the left side of the infield, easily cutting the Mountaineer advantage to 2-1. Marquis Riley attempted to score from second on the hit to knot the score at 2-2 but ASU left fielder Preston Troutman (Rockwell, N.C./East Rowan) gunned down Riley at the plate for the first out of the inning. One pitch later, catcher Tyler Tewell (Charlotte, N.C./Butler) threw out Dario Little as he attempted to steal third and Arrowood preserved the one-run lead when he forced an inning-ending flyout off the bat of Aggie slugger Xavier Macklin.

From there, it was all Appalachian. The Mountaineers scored the final four runs of the ballgame to complete a three-game season sweep of the Aggies and extend their winning streak in the series to nine-straight games.

Arrowood got the win, allowing one run on four hits over four innings to move to 6-1 on the campaign. Hyatt and Grant combined for four innings of no-hit relief and Miller worked around two hits in the ninth to close out the victory.

Hector Crespo (Miami, Fla./Florida Christian) led ASU offensively, going 2-for-2 with two runs, an RBI and three stolen bases. In the process, Crespo extended his hitting streak to nine games and upped his batting average to .296 on the season.

Jack Myers (Charlotte, N.C./Myers Park) extended a lengthy hitting streak as well, stretching his to 14 games with a fourth-inning single. He also stole three bases on the evening.

Tyler Zupcic (Charlotte, N.C./Providence) and Will Callaway (Greenville, S.C./Eastside) each drove in runs for the Mountaineers.

Appalachian embarks on its annual week-long break from the diamond to focus on final exams and returns to action next Wednesday when it hosts another local rival in East Tennessee

State. First pitch is set for 6 p.m. at Smith Stadium.