

ASU Blasts WCU on Strength of Five-Run Sixth

Written by Mike Flynn
Sunday, 08 May 2011 06:23

Jeremy Dowdy (Raleigh, N.C./Wakefield) broke a 4-4 tie with a two-out, two-run single in the bottom of the sixth inning and Hector Crespo (Miami, Fla./Florida Christian) followed with a three-run homer to lead Appalachian State University baseball to a 10-5 win over Western Carolina on Saturday evening at Beaver Field at Jim and Bettie Smith Stadium.

A season-best crowd of 804 saw sixth-place Appalachian (27-19) move to 11-11 in Southern Conference play while ninth-place Western Carolina (17-25-1, 7-15 SoCon) suffered another blow in its quest to be a part of the eight-team SoCon Tournament field.

ASU jumped out to a 4-0 lead in the bottom of the first inning but WCU plated four runs of its own in the top of the second to knot the contest at 4-4.

Behind a gutsy performance by Mountaineer starter Ryan Arrowood (Rutherfordton, N.C./Central) and a dominating effort by Western's Matt Benedict, the score remained 4-4 going into the bottom of the sixth.

After Daniel Kassouf (Lexington, N.C./North Davidson) drew his second walk of the evening, Zack Briggs (Lexington, N.C./Central Davidson) followed with ASU's first hit off Benedict since the first inning, a line-drive single to center field that put runners on first and second base with one out.

Preston Troutman (Rockwell, N.C./East Rowan) then laced a ground ball that was fielded by a diving WCU third baseman Austin Schultz. Schultz recovered in plenty of time to cut down Briggs at second on the hot shot but his throw pulled Catamount second baseman Ross Heffley from the bag, leaving the bases loaded on the error.

Will Callaway (Greenville, S.C./Eastside) struck out for the second out of the inning but Dowdy roped a base hit through the right side of the infield, scoring Kassouf from third and Briggs from second to give the Mountaineers a 6-4 lead.

On the eighth pitch of the next at-bat, Crespo launched a 3-2 pitch into the beautiful High Country evening and well over the left center field wall for a three-run homer that gave Appalachian a commanding 9-4 advantage. The blast was Crespo's first of the season.

ASU tacked on another run on Troutman's third RBI of the night in the seventh. David Port (Dunwoody, Ga./Dunwoody) relieved Arrowood in the eighth and worked around a solo homer by WCU's Stephen Notaro in the ninth to close out the victory.

Arrowood labored through seven innings, surrendering season highs for hits (11) and walks (5), but pitched his way out of numerous jams and only gave up the four second-inning runs to move to 7-1 on the campaign. Benedict, who did not allow a hit over a 4.2-inning stretch after ASU's four-run first, wound up being tagged for nine runs (four earned) over six stanzas of work and suffered the loss to fall to 2-4.

Troutman (2-for-4, two runs, three RBI) and Briggs (2-for-3, two runs, RBI) paced the Mountaineers' nine-hit attack. Jack Myers (Charlotte, N.C./Myers Park) extended his hitting streak to an ASU season-best 16 games with a first-inning infield single and Crespo stretched his hitting streak to 11 games with the sixth-inning bomb.

With the triumph, Appalachian has won 11 of its last 15 SoCon games after an 0-7 start in conference play. Western Carolina has lost five in a row overall and five of its last eight in

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SoCon action.

The clubs continue their three-game SoCon series on Sunday at 1 p.m. at Smith Stadium. Game coverage begins at 12:40 pm on AM 1450, WATA.