Written by Mike Flynn
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No. 17 North Carolina broke open a tight ballgame with four runs in the bottom of the eighth inning and downed Appalachian State University baseball, 7-2, on Tuesday afternoon at Boshamer Stadium.

Appalachian (29-24) trailed just 3-2 after seven-and-a-half innings but UNC's four-run explosion in the eighth ended ASU's hopes of getting its first win in the last 12 meetings with the Tar Heels.

The Mountaineers jumped out to a 1-0 lead in the top of the first when Preston Troutman (Rockwell, N.C./East Rowan) drew a bases-loaded walk and after North Carolina (41-12) took a 2-1 lead in the third on Levi Michael's two-run single, Jeremy Dowdy (Raleigh, N.C./Wakefield) knotted the score at 2-2 with an RBI single to left field.

UNC regained a one-run lead on a Dowdy error in the fifth but didn't put the game out of reach until the eighth. Seth Baldwin capped the four-run frame with a two-run homer to right field.

Despite the loss, Appalachian's pitching staff turned in one of its finest performances of the season, limiting Carolina's powerful offense to just six hits. Five of the Tar Heels' six hits were singles, with all five coming on ground balls that found holes in the ASU infield.

Pitching near his hometown of Apex, N.C., Mountaineer starter Ryne Frankoff (Apex, N.C./Apex) was particularly effective. The left-handed sophomore allowed just two earned runs on three hits in five innings of work but suffered the tough-luck loss to fall to 1-1 on the season.

ASU managed just three hits against six UNC pitchers, with none coming after Daniel Kassouf's (Lexington, N.C./North Davidson) leadoff single in the sixth inning. The Mountaineers squandered scoring opportunities in the first inning, when they left the bases loaded after UNC starter Cody Styles walked in the first run of the game, and in the sixth, when they didn't score after their first two hitters of the stanza reached base.

North Carolina's Greg Holt (7-1) earned the win with 4.1 strong innings in relief of Styles, who didn't make it out of the first after issuing three walks and hitting a batter in just two-thirds of an inning. Holt surrendered just one run on two hits while striking out seven.

Appalachian closes the regular season this weekend when it hosts a three-game Southern Conference series versus Georgia Southern. The three-game set begins on Thursday at 6 p.m. at ASU's Beaver Field at Jim and Bettie Smith Stadium.