Written by Mike Flynn
Sunday, 24 February 2013 09:37

Strong performances from sophomores Jamie Nunn (Winston-Salem, N.C./Mount Tabor) and Alex Leach (Charlotte, N.C./Ardrey Kell) led Appalachian State University baseball to a 6-2 victory over visiting Butler in the first game of

Saturday's doubleheader but the Mountaineers committed five errors in a 12-7 loss to the Bulldogs in the nightcap of the twinbill at Beaver Field at Jim and Bettie Smith Stadium.
With the doubleheader split, Appalachian State went to 3-1 on the season and Butler moved to 2-3. The clubs play the rubber match of their three-game weekend series on Sunday at Smith Stadium. First pitch is set for 1 p.m.
The story of the series opener was Nunn, who tossed seven solid innings, and Leach, whose three-run home run in the sixth broke a 2-2 tie and lifted the Mountaineers to the 6-2 triumph.
Nunn (2-0) picked up right where he left off when he beat No. 8 NC State in last Friday's season opener, allowing just two runs on five hits over seven innings of work against a Butler lineup that was averaging nearly nine runs a game coming into the series. The right-hander and reigning Southern Conference Pitcher and Student-Athlete of the Week struck out six, did not issue a walk and needed just 87 pitches to cruise to his second win of the season.
Offensively, Appalachian State was kept off-balance by Butler starter Eric Stout for much of the game and, despite Nunn's effort on the mound, trailed 2-1 after five innings. However, the Mountaineers finally broke through against Stout (0-2) in the bottom of the sixth, plating four runs to turn the one-run deficit into a 5-2 lead.
Pinch-hitter William Head (Asheville, N.C./Asheville) got the rally started in the sixth when he drew a leadoff walk, stole second and moved to third on Hector Crespo's (Miami, Fla./Florida Christian) infield single. After Dillon Dobson (Boonville, N.C./Starmount) walked on four pitches, Will Callaway (Greenville, S.C./Eastside) lined a sacrifice fly to left field, allowing Head to come home from third and knot the score at 2-2.
The score remained tied for only two pitches, as Leach followed Callaway's sacrifice by launching his first home run of the season into the Butler bullpen in right field, giving the Mountaineers their first lead of the afternoon at 5-2.
Appalachian tacked on an insurance run on Crespo's two-out RBI single in the seventh and Taylor Thurber (Mooresville, N.C./Lake Norman) nailed down the victory with two innings of scoreless relief.
Jaylin Davis (McLeansville, N.C./Northeast Guilford) also homered for the Mountaineers in their third-straight victory to begin the season. The season-opening winning streak came to an abrupt halt in the nightcap, however, as Appalachian State's five errors led to five unearned runs that proved to be the difference in the 12-7 setback.
In addition to committing five errors, Appalachian also surrendered 17 hits in the loss, including four by Butler third baseman Mike Kseniak (4-for-6, 2B, two RBI, two runs). Crespo went 3-for-5 in Game 2 to cap a 5-for-9 day at the plate. Dobson and Leach chipped in with two hits apiece in the nightcap to help pace the Mountaineers' 12-hit output.
NOTES: Appalachian stretched its winning streak versus Atlantic 10 opponents to six games with the win in Saturday's opener before suffering its first loss to an A-10 member since 2006 in the finale ... prior to the 12-7 defeat to Butler, Appalachian hadn't lost to an A-10 club since a

4-3 setback at Charlotte on April 25, 2006 ... Crespo stole three bases on Saturday (two in Game One, one in Game Two) to give him 83 for his career, just two shy of Appalachian State's all-time record of 85 (set by Will Shellman from 1991-94) ... the Mountaineers have hit eight home runs through four games ... last season, Appalachian did not hit its eighth home run until the 14th game of the campaign.

Photo Courtesy: Hector Crespo, ASU Athletics