Written by Mike Flynn
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Appalachian State University baseball broke open a close game by plating five runs in the top of the sixth inning and went on to defeat Georgia, 8-5, on Wednesday afternoon at Foley Field.

With the victory, Appalachian State (9-5) earned a split of the two-game midweek series at Georgia (8-9) and moved to 6-4 in its last 10 matchups versus opponents from the powerful Southeastern Conference.

After scoring three runs in the top of the first inning, Appalachian was limited to just one hit over the next four stanzas and was clinging to a 3-2 advantage when it came to the plate in the sixth. However, highlighted by a two-run double by Josh Zumbrook (Wilkesboro, N.C./West Wilkes), the Mountaineers exploded for four hits en route to the five-run sixth, which turned the one-run lead into a commanding 8-2 advantage.

Georgia made it interesting with two runs in the bottom of the sixth and one in the eighth but Taylor Thurber (Mooresville, N.C./Lake Norman) finished off four innings of impressive relief by inducing a 4-6-3 double play to seal the victory in the ninth.

Four Appalachian pitchers combined to limit UGA's powerful offense, which was hitting .315 as a team coming into the afternoon, to just three earned runs on five hits. Jeffrey Springs (Belmont, N.C./South Point) got his first win of the season with two innings of no-hit relief and Thurber allowed one run on three hits over the final four frames to pick up the first save of his career.

Offensively, seven different players had hits and six drove in runs for the Mountaineers. Zumbrook led the charge, going 2-for-4 with two RBI and a run scored. Hector Crespo (Miami, Fla./Florida Christian), Preston Troutman (Rockwell, N.C./East Rowan) and Will Callaway (Greenville, S.C./Eastside) also had two hits apiece for Appalachian while Dillon Dobson (Boonville, N.C./Starmount) added a pair of RBI on a towering two-run homer in the first.

Appalachian State returns home for the first time in over two weeks this weekend when it hosts a three-game series versus Cornell. The weekend set begins with a doubleheader on Saturday at Beaver Field at Jim and Bettie Smith Stadium. First pitch for the twinbill is set for 1 p.m.

NOTES: The win was Appalachian State's first over Georgia since a 7-5 triumph in Athens in 1982 ... Appalachian moved to 2-4 all-time versus UGA ... the Mountaineers went a very respectable 4-4 on their eight-game road stint, which began March 1 at Davidson ... first baseman Alex Leach (Charlotte, N.C./Ardrey Kell) sat out of Wednesday's game and is expected to miss a minimum of a week due to a head injury sustained when he was inadvertently kicked by Zumbrook while diving for a pop-up in foul territory during Tuesday night's game.

Photo Courtesy: Jeffrey Springs, ASU Athletics