

ASU Ground Phoenix In Doubleheader Sweep

Written by Megan Samassa
Saturday, 06 April 2013 20:05

Highlighted by freshman Pepper Butler's two home runs and eight RBI, the Appalachian State University softball team took two games from Southern Conference opponent Elon on Saturday at Sywassink/Lloyd Family Stadium. With the wins, the Mountaineers improve to 17-13 overall on the season and 11-3 in the SoCon, while Phoenix fall to 12-23 overall and 2-9 in conference play. The two wins keep Appalachian atop the SoCon standings and improve them to 8-0 in the friendly confines of Sywassink/Lloyd Family Stadium.

Game One: App State 7 , Elon 3

Appalachian took a 3-0 lead over the Phoenix in the bottom of the second when Ellie Manriquez singled to left field and Caroline Rogers drew a walk to put runners on first and second. Butler stepped in with two runners on and knocked a three-run homer, the first of her career, over the left field fence to allow the Mountaineers to take a 3-0 lead over Elon.

Elon's Carleigh Nester brought the Phoenix within two of the Black and Gold when she hit a solo home run over the left field fence in the top of the third inning. Appalachian notched its second multi-run homer of the game when Ashley Seering lined one over the right field wall, scoring Allie Cashion and extending the Apps' lead to 5-1.

App State tacked on one run to take the 6-1 advantage when Sarah Warnock singled down the right field line and advanced to third on two groundouts before Cashion hit a shallow single to left center to bring Warnock home. Elon started a comeback in the top of the fifth inning when it loaded the bases on an Appalachian error, a single and a walk. Sarah Little singled through the left side of the field, scoring the first unearned run of the inning.

The second run of the inning crossed the plate when Grace Eng found the same hole as Little to bring the Phoenix within three of the Apps. Appalachian tacked on a seventh run in the bottom of the fifth inning when Manriquez had a leadoff walk and advanced to second on a Roger's sacrifice bunt. Manriquez crossed home when she advanced to third on a Warnock single and touched home on an Elon throwing error.

Five of the seven Appalachian runs crossed the plate off of home runs as Butler and Seering each notched multi-run homers on the afternoon. Warnock went 2-for-3 at the plate while Cashion and Manriquez each added a hit. Alissa Schoelkopf (10-6) picked up the win in the circle as she pitched her ninth complete game of the season with four strikeouts and allowed just one earned run.

Game Two: App State 8, Elon 5

Appalachian continued to shine offensively in game two when Seering had a leadoff double off the right field wall to start the second inning. Manriquez drew a walk to put runners on first and second before Rogers laid down her second sacrifice bunt of the afternoon to put runners on second and third for Butler.

Butler, who had led the Mountaineer offense all day, knocked a double in the right center gap to score both Seering and Manriquez. A follow-up single from Dani Heichen would score Butler and allow App State to take a 3-0 lead in the bottom of the second inning.

Elon responded to the three runs in the top of the fourth inning when Nester hit her second home run of the day with two runners on base to knot the score at 3-3 with no outs. The Phoenix took their first lead of the afternoon when Aly Quintana singled to center field, allowing two runs to cross the plate and Elon to take the 5-3 lead over the Apps. With one out and a runner on base, Appalachian would pull starting pitcher Shivaun Landeros and put in Schoelkopf.

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The Black and Gold fought back in the bottom of the fourth inning as it scored four runs on four hits. Seering notched her second hit of the day with a one-out single through the left side and advanced to second on a wild pitch before Manriquez walked for the second time in the contest. Rogers knocked a double to right center field that would score Seering and allow Appalachian to come within one of Elon.

Butler came to the plate with runners on second and third and drove her second home run of the day over the scoreboard, giving the Apps all the runs they would need to secure the victory. Cashion led off the fourth inning for the Mountaineers with a double down the left field line, which was her 44th career double. The double broke the Appalachian career doubles record which was previously held by Lindsay Glover (2004-07)

The Mountaineers tacked on a final run in the bottom of the sixth inning when Cashion singled through the right side of the field and moved to second on a Meghan Smith walk. Seering reached first on a fielder's choice and Cashion moved to third on the play before a wild pitch allowed Cashion to cross the plate.

Five players on the App State roster notched two hits in game two, while Butler had five RBI and Heichen and Rogers each knocked in one. Schoelkopf (11-6) earned her second win of the day as she came on in relief and pitched 4.2 innings with two strikeouts and gave up only one hit, while Landeros pitched 2.1 innings with one strikeout.

Butler led the entire App State offense as she went 3-for-5 with eight RBI and scored three times, while Warnock added four hits on the afternoon.

The Black and Gold will be back in action on Sunday, April 7 when it conclude the series with Elon in a single game. First pitch is scheduled for 1 p.m. and fans are asked to wear pink for the conclusion of Strike Out Cancer Weekend.

Photo Courtesy: Pepper Butler, ASU Athletics