

Walk-Off Triple Secures App Victory Over Furman

Written by Megan Samassa
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Appalachian State University softball improved on its perfect home record with a sweep over Furman on Saturday afternoon at Sywassink/Lloyd Family Stadium. The Mountaineers defeated the Paladins 3-2 in game one before a thrilling 5-4 victory on a Dani Heichen triple in the bottom of the seventh in game two. With the sweep App State improves to 23-16 overall on the season and 15-5 in the Southern Conference, while Furman falls to 22-23 overall and 7-9 in conference play.

Game One: App State 3, Furman 2

Senior Allie Cashion lit up the scoreboard in the bottom of the second inning for the Black and Gold when she drove her eighth home run of the season over the right center fence, giving the Mountaineers an early 1-0 lead over the Paladins. The home run marks Cashion's 39th career home run, which brings her within five of the career record (44).

A leadoff walk from Caroline Rogers in the bottom of the third inning would get something started for the Mountaineers as she advanced to second on a Pepper Butler single and came around to score when pinch hitter Alex Sohl doubled off the left field wall.

App State extended its lead to 3-0 when Lindsay Loudermilk dug in with one out and laced a hard hit groundout to first base that plated Heichen. The Paladins looked the threaten in the top of the fourth inning a single and a walk put two runners on before right fielder Ashley Seering retired the final out on a high hit ball to shallow right field.

Furman continued to battle as back-to-back home runs from pitcher Lauren Collier and Ambree Muller brought the Paladins within one of the Black and Gold. Furman was unable to push any more runs across the plate as relief pitcher Shivaun Landeros came in for the final two innings, allowing only one hit and earning her first career save.

The Apps tallied five hits, while Cashion, Sohl and Loudermilk each drove in one run. Furman out-hit Appalachian 6-5 as Natalie Clemmons and Ambree Muller both notched two hits. Sophomore Alissa Schoelkopf (14-9) earned the win in the circle as she went five innings with one strikeout.

Game Two: App State 5, Furman 4

Furman struck first in game two as Nikki Legg led off the contest with a single deep in the hole at shortstop. Stephanie Field recorded her 200th career hit when she single through the infield and scored Legg, allowing the Paladins to take an early 1-0 lead. Appalachian started a two out rally in the bottom of the third inning when Sarah Warnock drew a walk. The Mountaineers put runners on first and second for Loudermilk when Heichen singled to the pitcher.

Loudermilk picked up her first hit of the day when she singled up the middle to score Warnock and knot the score at 1-1.

Cashion lined her 15th double of the season down the left field line into the corner to score Heichen allow the Apps to take the 2-1 lead with two outs. Senior Meghan Smith extended the Black and Gold lead to 4-1 when she hit a shallow single to the right field gap, plating both Loudermilk and Cashion.

Furman would come from behind once against in the top of the sixth inning when three singles and a groundout to first base scored one, bringing the Paladins within two of Appalachian. In an exciting seventh inning, Furman put runners in scoring position on back-to-back singles and a sacrifice bunt from Clemmons. With no outs Schoelkopf would come in to pitch for the Mountaineers before a double to left center field scored two and knotted the score at 4-4.

With one out in the bottom of the seventh inning Heichen hit a triple into the left field gap and

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was able to score on an error by the center fielder as the Apps took the 5-4 victory from Furman to remain perfect in the friendly confines of Sywassink/Lloyd Family Stadium.

Smith notched one hit and two RBI for Appalachian, while Heichen added two hits and scored twice. Furman tallied 11 hits on the contest, while the Mountaineers had only eight hits through seven innings of play. Landeros pitched six complete innings with three strikeouts; before Schoelkopf came in and picked up her second win of the afternoon, moving her to 15-9 overall on the season.

Appalachian will be back in action on Sunday, April 21 when they honor seniors Allie Cashion and Meghan Smith in the series finale against Furman. The single game is slated to start at 1 p.m. with senior recognition for both teams following the contest.

Photo Courtesy: Dani Heichen, ASU Athletics