

ASU Baseball Gets First Win Over Ranked Opponent in 29 Years

Written by Mike Flynn

Saturday, 26 February 2011 10:16

Appalachian State University baseball snapped a 29-year losing streak against nationally ranked opponents with an impressive 7-5 triumph over No. 20 Miami (Fla.) on Friday night at Alex Rodriguez Park.

Appalachian (5-1) defeated a nationally ranked club for the first time since it downed No. 23 The Citadel, 5-4, in 1982. However, the victory is ASU's sixth since 2007 over an opponent from the perennially powerful Atlantic Coast Conference.

A towering three-run home run by catcher Jeremy Dowdy (Raleigh, N.C./Wakefield) in the fifth inning proved to be the difference in Friday's triumph. The blast hit midway up the scoreboard beyond the left field fence at Alex Rodriguez Park and gave the Mountaineers a commanding 6-0 lead.

Despite Dowdy's bomb, the story of the evening was clutch performances turned in by Appalachian's pitching staff. Making his second collegiate start just miles from his home, freshman left-hander Lawrence Pardo (Miami, Fla./Christopher Columbus) worked six terrific innings, allowing just four hits and striking out five while not surrendering an earned run.

The only runs that Miami (3-3) managed against the young southpaw came with two outs in the bottom of the fifth inning when fellow freshman third baseman Noah Holmes (Rockwell, N.C./East Rowan) misplayed a big-league popup with the bases loaded. The miscue allowed two UM runners to score and the third came home when Pardo made an errant throw to the plate at the end of the same play.

In the bottom of the seventh inning, it was David Port's (Dunwoody, Ga./Dunwoody) turn for heroics on the mound. The right-handed junior came on with the bases loaded and nobody out and surrendered just one run to maintain a 6-4 advantage. Port got out of jam by buckling the knees of pinch-hitter Chatz Mack with a devastating curveball for an inning-ending strikeout.

After the Mountaineers tacked on an insurance run in the top of the ninth, the Hurricanes made it interesting in the bottom of the stanza. With one out, two runners on and a run already in against ASU closer Taylor Miller (Raleigh, N.C./Wakefield), Mack hit a long single off the wall in

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left center field. UM held Harold Martinez at third on the hit but pinch-runner Nathan Melendres also tried to advance to third thinking Martinez would be sent home on the deep line drive. Melendres was tagged for the second out. One batter later, Miller fanned pinch-hitter David Villasuso to end the ballgame.

Miami, which made four errors in Thursday's series opener, had three more miscues on Friday, and also walked eight ASU batters. The Hurricanes' sloppy play was especially evident in the top of the fourth inning when they issued three walks and committed an error that led to the Mountaineers scoring three runs with only one hit that left the infield.

Pardo (1-0) earned his first-career win while Miller picked up his first save of the season.

Appalachian goes for the series victory when it meets Miami for the rubber game of the three-game weekend set on Saturday. First pitch is set for 1 p.m. at Alex Rodriguez Park.

ASU 7, MIAMI 5

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 R H E

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ASU 0 0 0 3 3 0 0 0 1 7 6 2

MIAMI 0 0 0 0 3 0 1 0 1 5 8 3

ASU: HITTING: JEREMY DOWDY 2-4, HR, 3 RBI 2 RUNS SCORED; ZACK BRIGGS 2-4.
PITCHING: WINNING PITCHER LAWRENCE PARDO (1-0): 6 INNS, 3 RUNS, NONE
EARNED, 4 HITS, 3 WALKS, 5 STRIKEOUTS. SAVE - TAYLOR MILLER (1): 2 INNS, 1 RUN, 1
EARNED RUN, 3 HITS, 1 WALK, 3 STRIKEOUTS.

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