

## Mountaineers Stun GSU with Five-Run Eighth

Written by Mike Flynn  
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Appalachian State University baseball scored five runs in the bottom of the eighth inning to erase a three-run deficit and claim a thrilling 8-6 victory over Georgia Southern on Friday evening at Beaver Field at Jim and Bettie Smith Stadium.

With the victory, Appalachian (31-24, 15-14 SoCon) clinched sixth place in the Southern Conference standings. As the No. 6 seed, the Mountaineers will face the winner of Saturday's College of Charleston-Samford game in the first round of the SoCon Tournament on Wednesday at 1 p.m. in Charleston, S.C.

Due in large part to seven walks and two errors, ASU trailed Georgia Southern, 6-3, going into the bottom of the eighth inning. After managing just six hits and one earned run in seven innings against GSU starter Andy Moye, the Mountaineers welcomed reliever Colin Snow to the game in the eighth by putting runners on first and third with nobody out, thanks to a leadoff double by Tyler Zupcic (Charlotte, N.C./Providence) and a single by Trey Holmes (Rockwell, N.C./East Rowan).

Snow walked Jack Myers (Charlotte, N.C./Myers Park) on four pitches to load the bases and Daniel Kassouf (Lexington, N.C./North Davidson) drew a seven-pitch walk to force Zupcic home with the first run of the inning and cut the Appalachian deficit to 6-4.

Things went from bad to worse for GSU when Justin Hess replaced Snow on the mound following the bases-loaded walk. Will Callaway (Greenville, S.C./Eastside) lined Hess' first pitch into right center field for a two-run single that knotted the score at 6-6. Preston Troutman (Rockwell, N.C./East Rowan) followed by reaching on a fielder's choice and Callaway stole third to put runners on the corners with just one out.

Callaway's stolen base turned out to be one of the biggest plays of the game when the final pitch of Zack Briggs' (Lexington, N.C./Central Davidson) five-pitch walk sailed over Briggs' head and to the backstop, allowing Callaway to come home with the go-ahead run.

The Eagles' eighth-inning meltdown became complete when Hess attempted to pick off Briggs at first but no one was covering the bag and the ball bounced into foul territory down the right field line, allowing Troutman to score all the way from second and give ASU an 8-6 lead.

Appalachian closer Taylor Miller (Raleigh, N.C./Wakefield) struck out two in a perfect ninth to finish off the epic come-from-behind triumph.

Georgia Southern put 20 runners on base in the game with 10 hits, seven walks, a hit batter and two Mountaineer errors. However, ASU pitchers worked out of several jams to strand 14 of the Eagles' 20 baserunners.

High Country native Tyler Moore (Banner Elk, N.C./Watauga) (1-0) turned in 2.1 innings of one-hit relief to earn his first career win while Miller collected his 11th save of the season. Zupcic, Holmes and Hector Crespo (Miami, Fla./Florida Christian) all went 2-for-4 to pace Appalachian's 10-hit attack. Callaway and Crespo drove in two runs apiece and Callaway and Troutman each scored twice.

Snow (0-1) was charged with four runs without recording an out to suffer his first loss of the year. Steve Cochrane (3-for-4, double, RBI) led Georgia Southern (31-23, 17-12) offensively. Appalachian goes for its first-ever series sweep over GSU when the teams meet in the regular-season finale on Saturday. First pitch is set for 1 p.m. at Smith Stadium.

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**NOTES:** Western Carolina defeated The Citadel 6-0 Friday night. The Bulldogs will not qualify for the SoCon tournament this season. It's the first time since 1987. It will be the first time that head coach Fred Jordan has failed to reach the tournament and the first time the Bulldogs have ever missed the tournament since the event moved to Charleston in 1988.....Cioverage of ASU baseball at the SoCon tournament begins at 12:40 pm Wednesday afternoon on AM 1450, WATA.