

## Bulldogs Nip Mountaineers, 5-3

Written by Mike Kelly

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Call it a game of wasted opportunities.

The Appalachian State University baseball team left 11 men on base and hit into two double plays Wednesday afternoon in the opening round of the Southern Conference tournament. The end result, the Mountaineers blew an early 3-0 lead and lost to Samford 5-3 at Riley Park in Charleston, SC.

"We just couldn't get the key hits when we had to," said ASU coach Chris Pollard. "I thought we played good defense and pitched it well. We just couldn't come up with the big hit when we had to."

The Mountaineers (31-26) got off to a jack-rabbit start. A two-run double by Daniel Kassouf highlighted a three-run outburst in the first inning. Preston Troutman, who was named to the SoCon All-Freshman team, knocked in Kassouf with an RBI single two batters later and the Mountaineers seemed to be on their way.

Unfortunately, the Mountaineers sputtered. They left the bases loaded in the third-and-fourth innings, failing to extend their lead. The Bulldogs, the No.3 seed, grabbed the lead for good thanks to a three-run rally in the fifth. Saxon Butler's two-run double tied the game at 3-3, and Philip Ervin's run-scoring single gave the Bulldogs their first lead of the game.

"Every time we play ASU, it's a scrappy game," said Samford coach Casey Dunn. "We don't swing it real good, but our pitching was tough when it had to be today. Fortunately for us, we had one more big hit than they did."

And the Bulldogs did all their damage against Ryan Arrowood, who was nearly impeccable in the month of April. Arrowood, a second-team All-SoCon selection on the media team, coughed up four runs, three earned on eight hits in 6 2/3 innings. He walked three and struck out six in falling to 8-3 on the year.

"Ryan really pitched a good ball game," Pollard said. "He gutted this one out, but we just couldn't get the key hit to bail him out."

The Mountaineers made ten hits; Kassouf was 3-4 with that two-run double. Tyler Zupcic had two hits and scored a run. Ervin paced the Bulldogs with two hits and two RBI.

The win moves Samford (35-22) into a second-round game against Furman at 5 pm., on Thursday. The Paladins pulled off the upset by knocking off UNC-Greensboro 12-6 on Wednesday morning. The Mountaineers will play UNCG tomorrow morning in an elimination game at 9 am. Nathan Hyatt will get the starting nod in that game for ASU.

We will join that game at 9 am following the "Roten In The Morning Show" on AM 1450, WATA.

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