

Grant, ASU Blank Furman

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Behind the first-career shutout by pitcher Seth Grant, Appalachian State eliminated Furman, 5-0, to advance in the 2011 Bennett Hospitality Southern Conference Baseball Championship presented by Carolina Ford Dealers.

Appalachian State (33-26), the tournament's No. 6 seed, stays alive to play Samford tomorrow at 9 am (WATA will join this game in progress at 10 am). The Mountaineers must defeat the Bulldogs twice in order to get a chance to play for the SoCon title. Seventh-seeded Furman completes its season with a 24-33 overall record.

Grant picked up the win for the Mountaineers to improve to 5-9 on the season. The ASU starter went the distance in the shutout, striking out four and giving up six hits and one walk.

"I think it was certainly one of the best pitching performances I have seen this season and possibly one of the best pitching performances I have seen in my coaching career," said ASU head coach Chris Pollard. "He had complete control from the beginning, and the further the game went along he started to really smell the win and really attacked it."

Tyler Wood, who was the losing pitcher, fell to 3-5 after tossing 5.1 innings. The freshman gave up five runs on 12 hits and two walks.

Will Callaway led the Mountaineer offense with a 3-for-5 game, including scoring a run. Hector Crespo knocked in two ASU runs and scored one, as he went 1-for-3 on the day.

Appalachian State opened up the lead in the fourth inning with three runs against Wood.

Callaway started the Mountaineer hitting with a single to left and then moved to third on a single from Preston Troutman to put the runners on the corners. Zack Briggs brought home the first run of the game with a RBI sacrifice fly, and after another Mountaineer single, Crespo pushed two more across the plate with a triple to the gap in right center.

After the Mountaineers scored two more runs in the sixth with Crespo being hit by a pitch and connecting on three consecutive singles by Tyler Zupcic, Trey Holmes and Jack Myers, Furman then turned to reliever Stephen Gary. Gary helped the Paladins escape without any further damage after Holmes was caught stealing and Daniel Kassouf popped up to Gary.

Reese Wade paced the Paladins with two hits while Alex Abrams added another safety to close the tournament 7-for-9 (.778) at the plate.