

ASU Men's Soccer Unbeaten Streak At Eight

Written by Staff Reports

Sunday, 09 October 2011 08:12

ASU junior David Dodge (Oviedo, Fla./Oviedo) capitalized on a prime opportunity to net the game's only goal, as Appalachian State men's soccer (7-2-2, 2-0 SoCon) defeated defending Southern Conference champion UNCG (4-6, 1-1 SoCon) in a 1-0 game on Saturday night at ASU soccer stadium.

The win marks the Apps' eighth-straight game without a loss, the program's outright longest unbeaten streak since 1978. The Black and Gold posted a 6-0-2 record in its last eight games. "To get a win over the defending conference champions, that's big," noted head coach Matt Nelson. "They are a good team, one of the toughest on our schedule. Our guys came out hard and deserved a win. We got our chances and were able to put a chance away."

Appalachian built a 9-3 advantage in shots in the first period but was thwarted by UNCG keeper Peyton Ford, who stopped all four ASU shots in the period.

The Mountaineers' nearly benefitted from mistake by Ford with less than two minutes to play in the opening half. Ford mishandled the ball, which was recovered by Appalachian's Nate Latigue (Cary, N.C./Panther Creek). The junior pressed the net, but Ford made a diving save to keep the game scoreless heading into the intermission.

Appalachian's big break came in the 68th minute. Senior Mark Bridges (Morganton, N.C./East Burke) fired a deep shot from the right side that caromed off the left post. The rebound found Dodge in prime, and the junior slammed his shot into the right side of the net. Dodge's goal was his first of the season, while Bridges is now tied with a team-high four assists.

"The goal couldn't have come at a better time," commented Dodge. "The ball fell right to me, and I was in the right place at the right time."

In the final minutes, the Spartans scrambled to equalize the score, but five second-half saves by ASU keeper Danny Free (Doncaster, England/Hall Cross School) secured Appalachian's 1-0 victory. Free finished the game with six saves total, earning his fourth career shutout.

ASU freshman Sekani Sinclair (Parkland, Fla./Marjory Stoneman Douglas) recorded a game-high four shots, while Dodge notched three on the day.

"The streak is great, but we try to focus game by game," added Nelson. "We'll celebrate this win tonight, but starting tomorrow, our sights are set on our next game."

The Mountaineers hit the road destined for Georgia Southern for their next game on Friday, Oct. 14 at 4 p.m.

VOLLEYBALL: Mountaineers Ground Eagles

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Appalachian State volleyball kept itself atop the SoCon North Division standings with a 3-1 victory at Georgia Southern on Saturday, Oct. 8 at Hanner Fieldhouse.

The Mountaineers (12-7, 4-1) won their second-straight SoCon match and improved to 8-2 in their last 10 matches while the Eagles (11-10, 3-2) dropped just their second match in their last 10.

Appalachian led by as many as four points on two separate occasions in the first set before Georgia Southern rallied to take a 18-17 lead in the late stages. The Mountaineers would respond by reeling off three-straight points to snag a 20-18 lead.

GSU was able to grab a 22-21 lead and put Appalachian on the ropes, but ASU rallied to score five of the final seven points and take a hard-fought, 26-24 win. The first set featured 14 ties and six lead changes, the most of any set during the match.

The second set looked as if it would be an easy win for the Mountaineers after they built a 24-18 lead, but the Eagles roared back with five unanswered points to make it 24-23. Meghann Forshey (Glen Allen, Va./Deep Run) put the set away with one of her seven kills on the evening. The Eagles raced out to a 4-0 lead in the third set and cruised to a 25-17 win. The third set was the only set of the evening that did not see a single tie score or lead change.

Appalachian was able to jump out to an 11-7 lead in the fourth and final set before Georgia Southern tied it twice in the late stages of the set. With the set knotted at 21-21 Alison Blasingame (Yorktown, Va./Virginia Tech/Grafton) and Kelly Rhein (York, Pa./Virginia/York Catholic) picked up back-to-back kills to break the deadlock and give the Apps a 23-21 lead. GSU came within a point of tying the match at 24-23 but a service error on the potential match-tying point gave Appalachian a 25-23 set victory and the match win.

Anna Wagner (Lincoln, Neb./Florida Gulf Coast/Lincoln East) led all players with 15 kills and also recorded 17 digs in the match. Blasingame picked up 13 kills while Kasey Sauls (Prairie Village, Kan./Shawnee Mission East) led the team with 33 assists and recorded two service aces. Courtney Rhein (York, Pa./Eastern York) notched a match-high 26 digs.

As a team, Appalachian hit .266 while Georgia Southern hit .253. The Mountaineers recorded four blocks to GSU's five and fell one service ace short of a season-high with seven.

Appalachian State returns home for a match against Western Carolina at 7 p.m. ET on Wednesday, Oct. 12. The match marks the first of three-straight SoCon home matches for the Apps who also face Furman (Oct. 15) and Wofford (Oct. 16) next week.

WOMEN'S GOLF: Smith Leads Winthrop Intercollegiate

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Appalachian State University junior women's golfer Lauren Smith (Salisbury, N.C./UNCG) carded a season-best 71 (-1) on Saturday to lead the Winthrop Intercollegiate through one round. The Mountaineers stand in fourth place with a 313 (+25) heading into Sunday's final round.

In her first year of competition at ASU, the transfer from UNCG holds a one-stroke lead over Gardner-Webb's Sammy Vass. Smith owns a four-stroke cushion over three players tied in third place at 75 (+3) with 18 holes to play at the Rock Hill Country Club.

Rumbidzai Masamvu (Harare, Zimbabwe/Dominican Convent) ranks 12th for the Apps with a 79 (+8), while Mimi Burke (Mooresville, N.C./Cannon School) fired an 81 to tie in 16th place, two strokes back. Yue Xu (Beijing, China/HuiJia Private School) carded an 82 (+10) to tie for 23rd and Brittany Zachrich (Hickory, N.C./Montreat) rounded out ASU with an 83 (+11) for 26th place in the 45-golfer field.

GWU holds a one-stroke lead over host Winthrop with a 307 (+19). The Mountaineers find themselves trailing third-place Presbyterian by just two strokes.

Also competing from the Southern Conference, The Citadel stands sixth at 332 (+44). Tournament play concludes on Sunday.