

It Finally Happened.....

Written by Mike Flynn
Sunday, 18 March 2012 17:16

Right fielder Tyler Tewell (Charlotte, N.C./Butler) threw out pinch-runner T.J. Clarkson at the plate for the final out of Appalachian State University baseball's heart-stopping 7-6 win over The Citadel on Sunday afternoon at Beaver Field at Jim and Bettie Smith Stadium. With the victory,

Appalachian (17-3, 6-0 SoCon) completed its first-ever three-game series sweep of The Citadel (8-11, 1-5 SoCon). The Mountaineers also won for the 15th time in their last 16 games, upped their home record to 11-0 and moved to 6-0 in Southern Conference play for the first time in 34 years.

ASU took a seemingly safe 7-3 lead into the ninth inning and brought closer Nathan Hyatt (Brevard, N.C./Brevard) on in a non-save situation to finish off the victory. However, Hyatt struggled for the second-straight Sunday. The right-handed junior walked the first batter he faced then surrendered three-straight singles to allow The Citadel to cut the deficit to 7-4 with the bases loaded and nobody out. Hyatt retired the next two batters with a strikeout and a flyout to left field but the Bulldogs' Joe Jackson followed with a two-out, two-run single up the middle to bring The Citadel within a run at 7-6.

The next batter, Nick Orvin, singled to right field and, running on contact, Clarkson never broke stride as he headed for home representing the would-be tying run. Tewell fielded Orvin's sharp single on one hop and fired a strong throw that beat Clarkson to the plate by several strides. Catcher Jeremy Dowdy (Raleigh, N.C./Wakefield) easily applied the tag to end the ballgame. Aside from Tewell, the star of the day was ASU shortstop Will Callaway (Greenville, S.C./Eastside), who went 4-for-5 with two doubles, his second home run of the season, two RBI and three runs scored. In the process, the red-hot junior extended his hitting streak to 11 games and raised his batting average to a team-best .405. He is hitting .477 (21-for-44) during his 11-game hitting streak and has multiple hits in 10 of the last 15 ballgames.

Appalachian scored in each of the first six innings to jump out to what appeared to be a comfortable 7-3 advantage. In addition to Callaway's 4-for-5 effort, Dowdy went 2-for-3 with an RBI and two runs scored to help lead the Mountaineers' 11-hit attack.

Starting pitcher Rob Marcello (Royal Palm Beach, Fla./Royal Palm Beach) allowed just three runs on five hits while striking out five over seven innings to up his record to 3-0 on the campaign. The southpaw ran into his only real trouble in the third inning when he issued a pair of walks and surrendered two doubles to allow the Bulldogs to plate three runs.

Jackson and Mason Davis combined to drive in five of The Citadel's six runs. Bulldog starter Logan Cribb (1-1) was roughed up for six runs (five earned) and eight hits in five innings to suffer the loss.

Appalachian hits the road for four games this week, beginning with a non-conference affair at High Point on Tuesday evening. First pitch is set for 6 p.m. at HPU's Williard Stadium.

NOTES: Appalachian's three-game sweep over The Citadel was its first in a rivalry that dates back to 1972, ASU's first year in NCAA Division I and the Southern Conference ... ASU did sweep two-game series from The Citadel in 1973, 1974 and 1978 ... the Mountaineers' 6-0 conference start is their best since they won their first seven SoCon games in 1978 ... Tyler Zupcic (Charlotte, N.C./Providence) extended his ASU-season-best hitting streak to 13 games with a leadoff single in the fifth ... Zupcic and Callaway have reached base in 15-straight games

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while Hector Crespo (Miami, Fla./Florida Christian) has reached safely in 13-straight contests ... Callaway has multiple hits in 12 of Appalachian's 20 games and has hit safely in 17-of-20 overall ... despite his struggles the last two Sundays, Hyatt is still a perfect 7-for-7 in save opportunities this season.

Photo Courtesy: Will Callaway, ASU Athletics