

Long Ball Dooms Mountaineers

Written by Justin Bohn

Wednesday, 21 March 2012 06:31

The long ball doomed Appalachian State softball as USC Upstate swept the Mountaineers, 10-2, 12-4, on Tuesday at Sywassink/Lloyd Family Stadium. The Mountaineers fell to .500 (12-12) as the

Spartans improved to 24-4 with the help of 33 hits and six home runs. The Spartans struck first in the top of the first inning when Cheyenne Griffin attempted to steal second and a collision between Megan Rembielak and Meghan Smith at second base allowed Lindsay Kelly to score from third.

The Apps responded in the bottom half of the frame with two runs of their own to take a 2-1 lead. Rembielak reached on a single and stole second. She advanced to third on a single by Smith and scored when Smith attempted to advance to second and Upstate attempted to throw her out. Smith advanced to third on the play and scored on Allie Cashion's RBI-single.

Upstate countered in the second inning, stringing together four-straight singles with two outs to tie the game at 2-2 when lightning and then rain caused a delay in the game. After the teams broke for a 1:08 delay, the game resumed with Upstate at bat and the bases loaded with two outs.

Upstate's Griffin delivered an RBI-single off of the pitcher's leg with bases loaded to give the Spartans a 3-2 lead. Ashley Butler then cranked a grand slam that landed on top of the indoor practice football facility in center field to give the Spartans a 7-2 advantage.

Upstate increased its lead in the top of the fourth inning when Butler collected her fifth RBI of the game when she hit a single through the right side with runners on second and third to give the Spartans an 8-2 lead. Upstate added to the lead in the sixth inning when Robinson (DeLand, Fla.) knocked a solo home run to right center with two outs to give the Spartans a 9-2 lead.

The Spartans closed out their scoring in the game with solo homer from Butler to give Upstate a 10-2 lead.

Appalachian starter Caroline Williams allowed eight runs on 12 hits to take the loss. She fell to 3-2 on the year. Rembielak and Allie Cashion both recorded two hits to lead ASU's offense. In the second contest, Upstate jumped on top in the first inning when Shellie Robinson hit her second homer of the day with a two-run homer on a line drive over the left wall.

Appalachian took a run back in the bottom of the second when Cashion hit a solo home run to left for her ninth of the season. The Mountaineers threatened in the third inning, loading the bases with two outs. However, Upstate starter Lacey Dinney battled and forced Caroline Rogers to fly out to center to end the threat and keep the Spartans ahead, 2-1.

Upstate made it a two-run game with a run in the fourth inning with two outs and Kelly ripped a double to right to give the Spartans a 3-1 advantage.

Robinson went deep for the second-time of the game and the third on the day, a solo home run to right center to give the Spartans a 4-1 lead in the fifth inning. The Spartans added three more runs on an RBI-single, a bases loaded walk and on a bases loaded fielder's choice.

Upstate made it a 9-1 lead with two runs in the top of the sixth. Robinson reached on an error with one out, and Butler and Janna Lewis each followed with singles to drive in a run.

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Smith opened the bottom half of the sixth with a screaming double to left center and eventually scored on a on a sacrifice fly by Roger to get within 9-2.

With the game extended to the seventh inning on Appalachian's run in the sixth, Upstate added to its run total when Harris belted a three-run home run to right center to give the Spartans a 12-2 lead. Appalachian State continued to fight to the bitter end as Sarah Warnock rocked a one-out double to left center and scored on an RBI-double by Smith. Smith scored the Apps final run on an RBI-double by Rogers.

Dinney was solid in the circle as she allowed four runs on seven ASU hits in 6.2 innings of work to earn the victory, allowing three late runs once the game was in-hand. She struck out five and improved to 9-2 on the year. Appalachian's Caroline Wainright took the loss and allowed six runs on nine hits to fall to 5-4 on the year. Cashion once again tallied a pair of hits while Smith record a pair of her own.

The Mountaineers look to bounce back quickly as they travel to Radford, Va. are a single game with the Highlanders on Thursday at 5 p.m.

Photo Courtesy: Allie Cashion, ASU Athletics