

Mountaineers Throttle N.C. A&T, 14-0

Written by Mike Flynn

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Appalachian State University baseball scored eight runs in the bottom of the first inning and never looked back en route to a 14-0 romp over visiting North Carolina A&T on Tuesday afternoon at Beaver Field at

Jim and Bettie Smith Stadium. Appalachian (19-5) followed up the eight-run first by scoring in four of the next five innings and cruised to its 11th-straight win over longtime in-state rival N.C. A&T (7-16).

The Mountaineers sent 11 batters to the plate in the first inning and banged out six hits. ASU also benefitted from two walks, two wild pitches and an error on its way to its biggest first-inning scoring output in four years. Designated hitter Daniel Kassouf (Lexington, N.C./North Davidson) and first baseman Trey Holmes (Rockwell, N.C./East Rowan) delivered the biggest hits of the eight-run frame with an RBI double and RBI triple, respectively.

Appalachian added single runs in the third and fourth innings, three in the fifth and another single tally in the sixth to close out the scoring. Twenty-one ASU players saw action in the rout and 10 of the Mountaineers' 16 batters notched at least one hit. True freshman Brandon Burris (Concord, N.C./Mount Pleasant) led the way in his fifth-career start, going 3-for-3 with a double. Hector Crespo (Miami, Fla./Florida Christian), Will Callaway (Greenville, S.C./Eastside) and Jeremy Dowdy (Raleigh, N.C./Wakefield) chipped in with two hits apiece and Callaway collected three of the Apps' nine RBI.

Not to be overshadowed by the 14-run explosive was the shutout performance turned in by ASU's pitching staff. Five Mountaineer pitchers combined on the five-hit shutout, Appalachian's second in three games and third of the season.

True freshman Jamie Nunn (Winston-Salem, N.C./Mount Tabor) continued to impress in his third-career start. The right-hander allowed just three hits in five shutout innings and struck out three along the way to move to 2-0 in his young career. Following Nunn, right-handed relievers Josh Wilson (Edgefield, S.C./Strom Thurmond), Jordan Jessup (Westfield, N.C./East Surry), David Port (Dunwoody, Ga./Dunwoody) and Nathan Hyatt (Brevard, N.C./Brevard) turned in a scoreless inning apiece to complete the whitewashing.

Southpaw Ruben Torrellas, who limited the Mountaineers to three runs over six innings in ASU's come-from-behind victory at A&T on Feb. 28, was torched for nine runs (eight earned) on eight hits over three innings to suffer the loss on Tuesday and fall to 0-3 on the season. First baseman Kelvin Freeman had two of the Aggies' five hits.

With the victory, Appalachian moved to 12-0 at Smith Stadium this season. The 12-consecutive home wins are tied for the fifth-longest active home winning streak in NCAA Division I and good for ASU's longest home winning streak since it won 19-straight games at Smith Stadium from March 22, 2009-March 20, 2010.

The Mountaineers look to add to the home winning streak this weekend when they host a three-game non-conference series versus Oakland. The set begins with a doubleheader on Saturday at 1 p.m. at Smith Stadium.

NOTES: Appalachian's eight first-inning runs were its most since it plated nine runs in the opening stanza of a 23-8 rout over UNC Asheville on April 1, 2008 ... ASU has not lost to N.C. A&T since April 18, 2007 (a 16-15 setback at Smith Stadium) ... the Mountaineers moved to

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46-6 all-time versus the Aggies ... Appalachian has scored in double-figures in 10 of its last 16 games versus A&T ... Tyler Zupcic (Charlotte, N.C./Providence) beat out a bouncer down the third-base line in the fourth inning to extend his hitting streak to 17 games and move within 10 games of the longest hitting streak in school history (Rand Smith — 27 games in 2009) ... Callaway upped his hitting streak to 15 games ... Zupcic and Callaway have both reached base in 19-straight games ... Kassouf has hit safely in 16 of the last 17 games ... true freshman Alex Leach (Charlotte, N.C./Ardrey Kell) hit his first-career home run with a pinch-hit solo blast in the sixth ... Appalachian went 6-for-14 with two outs on Tuesday to up its gaudy team batting average with two outs to .330 (93-for-282).

Photo Courtesy: Alex Leach, ASU Athletics