

Record Crowd Watches ASU Rally to Down Oakland

Written by Mike Flynn

Saturday, 31 March 2012 23:06

A record crowd was on hand to see Appalachian State University baseball rally from a five-run deficit and beat visiting Oakland, 13-8, on Saturday afternoon at Beaver Field at Jim and Bettie Smith Stadium. The second game of Saturday's scheduled doubleheader was suspended due to rain with Appalachian leading,

10-3, in the bottom of the sixth inning. That contest will resume on Sunday at noon, immediately followed by the finale of the clubs' three-game series.

Appalachian (20-5) made a Smith Stadium-record crowd of 993 sweat through four-and-a-half listless innings before the Mountaineers took control with a seven-run fifth in the series opener. Oakland starter Jeff Gorecki cruised through three innings and even after ASU cut a 4-0 deficit in half with two runs in the bottom of the fourth inning, OU (3-19) came right back with three runs of its own in the top of the fifth to stretch its lead to 7-2.

However, the Mountaineers needed only one inning to climb out of the five-run hole. They strung together six hits and benefited from four walks to plate seven runs in the bottom of the fifth and turn the 7-2 deficit into a 9-7 advantage. Five of Appalachian's first seven batters in the seven-run fifth banged out base hits, capped by a two-out RBI double from Jeremy Dowdy (Raleigh, N.C./Wakefield) that knotted the score at 7-7 and chased Gorecki (1-4) from the game. Gorecki's replacement, Russell Luxton, walked all four batters he faced, forcing in two runs that gave the Apps their first lead of the day at 9-7.

Highlighted by a three-run, opposite-field homer from first baseman Trey Holmes (Rockwell, N.C./East Rowan), Appalachian tacked on four runs in the seventh to stretch its advantage to 13-7. Oakland responded with a single run in the top of the eighth but in his first appearance of the season after missing 24 games due to illness, junior left-hander Ryne Frankoff (Apex, N.C./Apex) worked a perfect ninth to seal the victory.

The pesky Grizzlies roughed up ASU ace Ryan Arrowood (Rutherfordton, N.C./R-S Central) for six runs in 4.1 innings but true freshman Jamie Nunn (Winston-Salem, N.C./Mount Tabor) came on to limit Oakland to a run on two hits over 2.2 innings, allowing the Mountaineers to overcome the big deficit. Nunn moved to 3-0 in his young career with the clutch performance out of the bullpen.

After their early struggles at the plate, every member of the Mountaineers' starting lineup wound up contributing to Appalachian's 15-hit attack. True freshman Brandon Burris (Concord, N.C./Mount Pleasant) led the way by going 3-for-3 to raise his batting average to .524. Holmes had a season-high four RBI, Hector Crespo (Miami, Fla./Florida Christian) added three RBI and Dowdy, Will Callaway (Greenville, S.C./Eastside) and Tyler Tewell (Charlotte, N.C./Butler) drove in two runs apiece to help pace the 13-run outburst.

With the victory, ASU moved to 13-0 at home this season and became just fourth team in program history to win 20 of its first 25 games.

NOTES: The previous Smith Stadium attendance record was 969, set on March 20, 2010 versus Western Carolina ... Appalachian is 20-5 for the first time since 1987 ... ASU's 1969 and 1984 clubs (both 21-4) are the only other teams in school history to win at least 20 of their first 25 games ... Tyler Zupcic (Providence, N.C./Providence) went 1-for-5 to extend his hitting

Record Crowd Watches ASU Rally to Down Oakland

Written by Mike Flynn

Saturday, 31 March 2012 23:06

streak to 18 games, two-thirds of the way to the school record of 27 (Rand Smith — 2009) ... Callaway went 2-for-4 to stretch his hitting streak to 16 games ... Callaway has nine multi-hit games and is batting a gaudy .444 (28-for-63) during his 16-game hitting streak ... Saturday's game was the Mountaineers' first against an opponent from the state of Michigan since 1981, when they swept a doubleheader from Hillsdale College.