

Arrowood Outduels Beck, ASU Downs Eagles

Written by Mike Flynn
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Ryan Arrowood (Rutherfordton, N.C./R-S Central) outpitched likely first-round Major League Baseball draft pick Chris Beck to lead 27th-ranked Appalachian State University baseball to a 5-1 win over Georgia Southern in a Southern Conference series opener on Friday evening at J.I. Clements Stadium. Arrowood limited

Georgia Southern to one run on six hits while striking out seven over seven innings and moved to 6-0 on the season. Offensively, Appalachian (25-7, 10-3 SoCon) jumped on Beck early, scoring three runs in the top of the first inning and another in the third to grab what proved to be an insurmountable 4-0 lead.

As has become commonplace for ASU, the Mountaineers did the lion's share of their damage with two outs. With two away in the first, Jeremy Dowdy (Raleigh, N.C./Wakefield) drew a bases-loaded walk to drive in the game's first run and Trey Holmes (Rockwell, N.C./East Rowan) followed with what proved to be the difference in the game, a two-run single that made it 3-0. Daniel Kassouf (Lexington, N.C./North Davidson) got in the act in the third when he blasted a two-out offering from Beck off the left-field foul pole for a line-drive solo home run. Kassouf's SoCon-high-tying 12th blast of the season gave the Apps a commanding 4-0 lead. Georgia Southern pulled within 4-1 by getting the only run it would manage against Arrowood in the bottom of the third but following Eric Phillips' RBI bunt single, ASU's ace allowed only three singles to the final 17 batters he faced. The score remained 4-1 until Appalachian added an insurance run on an RBI single by Will Callaway (Greenville, S.C./Eastside) in the ninth. On the play, Hector Crespo (Miami, Fla./Florida Christian) made a spectacular slide around a tag attempt at the plate to score the run and Georgia Southern head coach Rodney Hennon was subsequently ejected for arguing the call. Due to the ejection, Hennon is prohibited from coaching the Eagles on Saturday.

In the bottom of the ninth, Nathan Hyatt (Brevard, N.C./Brevard) struck out all four batters he faced (the first victim reached base when Hyatt's wicked slider skipped to the backstop following the third strike) to close out the win.

The Mountaineers look to clinch their fifth SoCon series in six attempts this season and keep their grip on first place in the conference standings when they meet GSU (20-16, 8-8 SoCon) on Saturday for game two of the three-game weekend series. First pitch is set for 6 p.m. at Clements Stadium.

Photo Courtesy: Ryan Arrowood, ASU Athletics