

Mountaineers Squander Six-Run Lead in 10-8 Loss

Written by Mike Flynn
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Appalachian State University baseball jumped out to a 7-1 lead on Senior Day but UNC Greensboro roared back to hand the 28th-ranked Mountaineers a rare home defeat, 10-8, on Sunday afternoon at Beaver Field at Jim and Bettie

Smith Stadium. Highlighted by a three-run home run from Jeremy Dowdy (Raleigh, N.C./Wakefield) and three two-out RBI from Will Callaway (Greenville, S.C./Eastside), Appalachian (34-11, 18-6 SoCon) led 7-1 after four innings but UNC Greensboro (22-23, 7-17 SoCon) scored three runs in the fifth inning and four in the sixth to grab a 8-7 advantage. The Mountaineers knotted the score at 8-8 when Trey Holmes (Rockwell, N.C./East Rowan) drew a bases-loaded walk in the bottom of the seventh but UNCG scored two runs with two outs in the top of the eighth to retake the lead for good.

As was the case for the vast majority of the game's scoring, the Spartans plated the deciding runs in the eighth with two outs. ASU reliever Tyler Moore (Banner Elk, N.C./Watauga) easily retired the first two batters of the inning and was one strike away from getting out of the frame but walked Zach Leach on a 3-2 pitch. Moore was once again one strike away from escaping the stanza unscathed when UNCG cleanup hitter Lloyd Enzor lifted a fly ball into right field. The hit landed in front of right fielder Tyler Tewell (Charlotte, N.C./Butler) and took an unusually high bounce over Tewell's head that went all the way to the wall for an RBI triple that gave the Spartans a 9-8 lead. One pitch later, Thomas Troelstrup lined a single into left-center field that brought Enzor home from third and stretched the UNCG advantage to 10-8.

Appalachian had opportunities over its final two at-bats to draw even but both threats were thwarted by untimely double plays. The Mountaineers had 12 hits on the afternoon but left nine men on base in addition to the back-breaking double plays in the final two innings. Tewell led the 12-hit attack with a 3-for-5 effort that raised his batting average to a team-high .391. Dowdy and Callaway drove in three runs apiece. Seven Appalachian pitchers combined to allow 11 hits, but more detrimentally, walked nine and hit two batters. ASU also committed an error that led to an unearned run.

Despite having its eight-game Southern Conference winning streak snapped, Appalachian remains atop the league standings and controls its own destiny in the quest for its first conference championship in 25 years. Regardless of what the other three teams in title contention (College of Charleston, Samford and Elon) do down the stretch, the Mountaineers can clinch no less than a share of the SoCon championship with four wins in their final six league games.

Appalachian, which dropped to 23-2 at home this season, takes a five-day break for final exams this week before resuming SoCon play with a three-game series at Samford next weekend. The three-game set opens with a doubleheader on Saturday at 2 p.m. (ET) in Birmingham, Ala.

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Photo Courtesy: Jeremy Dowdy, ASU Athletics