

Arrowood Sets School Record In Wins

Written by Mike Flynn
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Senior pitcher Ryan Arrowood (Rutherfordton, N.C./R-S Central) became Appalachian State University's all-time wins leader in the top-seeded Mountaineers' 7-5 victory over No. 8-seed Furman in the opening round of

the 2012 Southern Conference Baseball Championship on Wednesday evening at Fluor Field. Arrowood worked seven strong innings to earn the 27th win of his career and break the school record of 26 victories set by former teammate Matt Address (2007-10). With the triumph, Appalachian (39-14) will play the winner of Wednesday night's final first-round matchup between No. 4-seeded Samford and No. 5-seed Western Carolina on Thursday at 8 p.m. for a spot in Saturday's semifinal round.

Buoyed by Arrowood retiring 15 of the first 19 batters he faced, Appalachian raced out to a 5-1 lead through five innings. The Mountaineers' senior ace appeared to fatigue a bit in the sixth inning when he allowed five-straight baserunners to open the frame and Furman (26-30) plated three runs to cut the Appalachian advantage to 5-4. However, ASU answered with back-to-back sacrifice flies from Daniel Kassouf (Lexington, N.C./North Davidson) and Tyler Tewell (Charlotte, N.C./Butler) in the bottom of the stanza to stretch its lead back to three runs at 7-4. Approaching the 100-pitch mark on a hot, muggy evening, Arrowood returned to the mound in the bottom of the seventh inning and promptly gave up consecutive singles that brought the tying run to the plate with nobody out. Despite the two-on, no-out predicament and a pitch count now well over the century mark, Appalachian's coaching staff chose to leave Arrowood in the ballgame by getting the next two batters to pop up and strike out.

With two outs in the frame, an ASU error allowed the Paladins to cut the deficit to 7-5. Unfazed, Arrowood induced the final batter he faced to fly out to center field, stranding the would-be tying run on base and preserving the Mountaineers' two-run lead.

Despite Arrowood's gutsy effort and Appalachian's 10-hit offensive attack, the difference in the ballgame may have been the performances turned in by Mountaineer relievers Ryne Frankoff (Apex, N.C./Apex) and Nathan Hyatt (Brevard, N.C./Brevard). Frankoff and Hyatt retired six of the seven batters they faced over the final two innings, with the only blemish being a runner that reached against Hyatt on a two-out error in the ninth. However, Appalachian's flame-throwing closer easily worked around the two-out miscue to seal the victory and extend his own school record with his 15th save of the season.

In all, Arrowood scattered eight hits over his seven innings, allowing five runs (four earned) and striking out five. In addition to moving to 27-8 for his career, the right-hander also upped his record to 10-0 on the campaign and within striking distance of the single-season school record of 12 wins, set by Pete Hardee in 1984. Offensively, Kassouf and Tyler Zupcic (Charlotte, N.C./Providence) drove in two runs apiece while Will Callaway (Greenville, S.C./Eastside) and Trey Holmes (Rockwell, N.C./East Rowan) each had two hits.

NOTES: The win was Appalachian's 10th in 23 all-time SoCon Tournament openers ... ASU's last victory in a tournament lid-lifter was a 4-1 triumph over The Citadel in the first round of the 2009 SoCon Tourney — the last time the championship was played in Greenville ... the Mountaineers moved to 5-4 all-time versus Furman at the SoCon Tournament ... Appalachian extended its winning streak over Furman to seven games ... ASU moved within one win of the

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program record of 40, set in 1986 ... Frankoff has appeared in eight of the last nine games and surrendered only one earned run during that stretch ... Callaway and Hector Crespo (Miami, Fla./Florida Christian) both reached base for the 14th-straight game ... Tewel went 1-for-3 to extend his hitting streak to six games ... Hyatt elicited some oohs and ahhs from the crowd when Fluor Field's scoreboard radar gun display clocked his fastball at 101 miles per hour in the ninth inning ... however, stadium veterans said that the clock generally reads about 4 MPH high, meaning that Hyatt's heater was likely topping out at a still-not-too-shabby 97 MPH.