

Western Carolina Crushes ASU, 23-5

Written by Mike Flynn
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Western Carolina scored six runs in the top of the first inning and never looked back on its way to a 23-5 win over Appalachian State University baseball in Thursday's Southern Conference series opener at Beaver Field at Jim and Bettie Smith Stadium.

Western Carolina (37-17, 22-6 SoCon), the SoCon's regular-season champion, led 12-0 before Appalachian State (27-21, 12-13 SoCon) plated its first run in the bottom of the third inning. Appalachian trailed by as many as 21 runs before scoring three in the bottom of the ninth to account for the final deficit. The 18-run defeat was the Mountaineers' worst since a 24-2 loss to Elon on March 16, 2007.

WCU banged out 21 hits as a team and its third, fourth and fifth batters in the order (Julian Ridings, Tyler White and Jacob Hoyle) combined for 13 RBI. The 29th-ranked Catamounts hit five home runs, including four by the Ridings-White-Hoyle trio, and had five doubles. White homered twice and had a double in his 4-for-6, four-RBI, four-run performance.

Eight different Mountaineers had hits, including Will Callaway (Greenville, S.C./Eastside), who extended his hitting streak to 23 games with an eighth-inning single. Callaway's 23-game hitting streak is tied for the third-longest in Appalachian State history, just four games shy of Rand Smith's school-record 27-game streak (2009).

The clubs resume their three-game SoCon series on Friday evening at Smith Stadium. First pitch is set for 6:30 p.m.

NOTES: Callaway is tied with Brad Peisel, who also hit safely in 23-straight games in 2005, for the third-longest hitting streak in Appalachian State history ... Mountaineer starting pitcher Jamie Nunn (Winston-Salem, N.C./Mount Tabor) did not record a quality start for only the third time in 14 outings this season ... Nunn, who has made 37 career appearances, allowed a career-high eight runs in two innings of work ... Appalachian has lost four of its last games versus longtime rival Western Carolina ... with the loss, the Mountaineers cannot finish higher than fifth in the SoCon standings and is assured of being the visiting team in next Wednesday's SoCon Tournament opener at Fluor Field in Greenville, S.C. ... Appalachian remains in fifth place in the SoCon standings, a half-game ahead of sixth-place Georgia Southern (25-28, 13-15 SoCon) ... Western Carolina has won 15-straight SoCon games and 20 of its last 22 overall.

Photo Courtesy: Will Callaway, ASU Athletics