

Eight-Inning Homer Lifts Wolfpack over ASU

Written by Mike Flynn

Sunday, 23 February 2014 17:17

NC State's Jake Armstrong hit a two-run homer with two outs in the eighth inning to lift the sixth-ranked Wolfpack to a 3-1 victory over Appalachian State University baseball on Sunday afternoon at Doak Field.

With the heartbreaking loss, Appalachian State fell to 0-7 on the season. Six of the seven losses have come at the hands of nationally ranked opponents and four of the seven have been decided by two runs or less.

Sunday's game featured a pitchers' duel between Appalachian's Jeffrey Springs (Belmont, N.C./South Point) and NC State's Brad Stone. Springs limited the Wolfpack to one run on four hits over 5.2 innings while Stone blanked the Mountaineers over six innings.

NC State (6-1) broke a scoreless tie in the fifth when Springs made the only crucial mistakes of his sterling outing. After retiring the Wolfpack's first two batters of the inning on just five pitches, Appalachian's junior southpaw hit Logan Ratledge with a 1-1 pitch. Armstrong followed by ripping a full-count pitch into the gap in left center field, which allowed Ratledge to score all the way from first base and give NC State a 1-0 lead.

The Mountaineers got the run back in the top of the seventh when Jaylin Davis (McLeansville, N.C./Northeast Guilford) and Dillon Dobson (Hamptonville, N.C./Starmount) welcomed NC State

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reliever Eric Peterson to the game with back-to-back singles. After a sacrifice bunt and strikeout put Dobson and Davis on second and third with two outs, Peterson skipped a pitch to the plate that deflected off catcher John Mangum and up the third-base line. The wild pitch only got about 15 feet away from home plate but Davis made a great break on the play and easily scored to knot it at 1-1.

The score remained 1-1 until the bottom of the eighth when NC State struck again with two outs to claim the victory. It was Armstrong again who drove a 1-2 pitch from Appalachian reliever Taylor Thurber (Mooresville, N.C./Lake Norman) over the left-field wall for a two-run blast that gave the Wolfpack a 3-1 lead.

Peterson (1-0) retired the side in order in the ninth to seal the win for NC State.

Thurber (0-1) was saddled with the loss despite two innings of otherwise effective relief.

Davis, Dobson, Preston Troutman (Rockwell, N.C./East Rowan) and Michael Pierson (Coral Springs, Fla./Pine Crest) all had hits for Appalachian while Armstrong accounted for three of the Wolfpack's seven hits and all three RBI in the game.

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Appalachian State returns to action on Tuesday with another contest against a nationally ranked foe at No. 17 North Carolina. First pitch is set for 3 p.m. at Boshamer Stadium in Chapel Hill, N.C.

Photo Courtesy: Jeffrey Springs, ASU Athletics