

App State Completes Sweep Over UNCA

Written by Mike Flynn
Monday, 10 March 2014 08:06

A five-run third inning proved to be the difference in Appalachian State University baseball's 7-5 win over UNC Asheville on Sunday afternoon at Beaver Field at Jim and Bettie Smith Stadium.

With the victory, Appalachian State (4-11) completed a three-game weekend sweep of UNC Asheville (3-10). The Mountaineers outscored the Bulldogs, 23-9, en route to their first series sweep since they took all three games from Wofford on April 28-29, 2012.

UNCA jumped out to a 2-0 advantage on Sam Turner's two-run home run in the top of the second inning. However, Appalachian responded with five runs in the bottom of the third to grab a lead it would never relinquish.

Tyler Stroup (Thomasville, N.C./East Davidson), Preston Troutman (Rockwell, N.C./East Rowan) and William Head (Asheville, N.C./Asheville) kick-started the five-run third with three-consecutive singles through right side of UNCA's infield. Tyler Zupcic (Charlotte, N.C./Providence) was hit by a pitch to drive in the first run and Dillon Dobson (Hamptonville, N.C./Starmount) knotted the score at 2-2 with a sacrifice fly to left field.

After a groundout, it appeared that the Mountaineers might only get two runs out of the promising inning but Alex Leach (Charlotte, N.C./Ardrey Kell) delivered the biggest hit of the

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game when he drove a full-count pitch into the gap in right-center field for a two-run double that gave Appalachian a 4-2 lead. Ozzy Gonzalez (Miami, Fla./South Miami) followed with an RBI single that capped the five-run frame.

Appalachian plated two more runs in the bottom of the fourth to stretch the advantage to 7-2, which was more than enough to endure UNCA scoring two runs in the sixth and one in the eighth. The Bulldogs did bring the tying run to the plate with no outs in the ninth but App State closer Robert Whaley (Hickory, N.C./Hickory) retired the final three batters to seal the win and earn his second save of the season.

In addition to pounding out nine hits, Appalachian State received a fine start on the mound from southpaw Jeffrey Springs (Belmont, N.C./South Point). Springs (1-0) worked six innings, scattering four runs on six hits and matching a career high with six strikeouts to earn his first win of the season.

Troutman and Head paced the Mountaineers' nine-hit attack with two apiece while Dobson and Leach drove in two runs each. Troutman scored two of Appalachian's seven runs.

Eli Miller and Kyle Carruthers led UNCA with two hits apiece.

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Appalachian State closes a four-game homestand on Tuesday with one of the most anticipated home games in program history versus Notre Dame. First pitch between the Mountaineers and Fighting Irish is set for 6 p.m. at Smith Stadium.

NOTES: Appalachian State extended its winning streak versus UNC Asheville to 14 games ... the Mountaineers, who own a 40-19 all-time record against the Bulldogs, have not lost in the series since a 14-1 UNCA victory in Boone on May 19, 2004 ... Appalachian did not commit an error all weekend ... prior to this weekend, the Mountaineers had committed at least one error in 11 of their first 12 games this season and had 21 fielding miscues in their previous eight contests ... App State's fielding percentage rose from .943 to .953 with the flawless defensive series ... Leach, who was hitless in his first 33 at-bats this season after missing nearly a full year due to head and hip injuries, has now hit safely in three of the last four games.

Photo Courtesy: Alex Leach, ASU ATHletics