

Seven Run Eighth Dooms Mountaineers

Written by James Ashley
Monday, 24 March 2014 08:06

The Appalachian State University baseball hit three two-run home runs but Georgia Southern scored eight runs over its final two at-bats to rally for a 10-7 win over the Mountaineers on Sunday at J.I. Clements Stadium in Statesboro, Ga.

Two-run homers by Alex Leach, Tyler Stroup and Michael Pierson helped Appalachian State (6-16, 1-2 Southern Conference) take a 7-2 lead into the bottom of the seventh inning. But Georgia Southern (19-6, 3-3 SoCon) scored a single run in the seventh and plated seven in the eighth to steal the rubber match of the three-game Southern Conference series.

Appalachian starter Jeffrey Springs carried the Mountaineers into the eighth inning, but eventually departed with runners at first and second base with one one.

After a walk and a costly run-scoring error, Georgia Southern chased relief pitcher Dallas DeVrieze from the game with a two-run single that made it 7-6. Sean Mason relieved DeVrieze but struggled with his control and he walked the first batter he faced on five pitches. He also threw a wild pitch that allowed the tying run to score.

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Matt Brill came on and he coughed up Ben Morgan's two-run single to right that gave the Eagles a 9-7 lead. Morgan capped GSU's seven-run eighth inning by stealing second, advancing to third on a groundout and scoring on a wild pitch.

The Mountaineers went down in order in the ninth.

Appalachian got on the board early when Georgia Southern starting pitcher Will Middour issued a hit and three walks in the top of the first inning that allowed the Mountaineers to take a 1-0 lead.

Georgia Southern took a 2-1 advantage with solo homers in the third and fifth innings but the Eagles were not on top for long, as Appalachian plated four runs in the sixth on Leach's and Stroup's two-run bombs to regain a 5-2 lead. An inning later, Pierson hit the Mountaineers' third two-run homer of the afternoon and Appalachian stretched its lead to 7-2.

GSU's late comeback spoiled a strong start by Springs, who allowed only three earned runs (five total) on nine hits over 7.1 innings. He set new career highs for innings pitched and strikeouts (seven). DeVrieze (0-2) was charged with the loss.

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Pierson led Appalachian offensively with two hits, a walk, three RBI and two runs scored. Stroup chipped in with two hits, two RBI and two runs.

Kody Adams led the Eagles with three hits, two runs and three RBI. Ryan Frederick (3-0), GSU's fifth pitcher of the afternoon, worked the final two innings and retired six-straight Appalachian batters to earn the win.

Appalachian State returns to North Carolina for mid-week games at High Point on Tuesday, and at home against East Tennessee State on Wednesday. UNC-Greensboro comes to town Friday for a three-game SoCon series at Beaver Field/Smith Stadium.

Wednesday's game with ETSU will air on AM 1450, WATA beginning at 3:40 p.m.

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Photo Courtesy: Alex Leach, ASU Athletics