

No.1 Gamecocks Nips App State, 2-1

Written by Mike Flynn
Wednesday, 02 April 2014 10:05

Pinch-hitter Grayson Griener's walkoff RBI single lifted No. 1 South Carolina to a 2-1 victory over Appalachian State University baseball on Tuesday night at

Carolina Stadium.

The one-run loss was Appalachian State's seventh of the season and fourth at the hands of a nationally ranked team.

Thanks in large part to sterling starting pitching by App State's Jeffrey Springs (Belmont, N.C./South Point) and South Carolina's Evan Beal, the score was knotted at 1-1 going into the bottom of the ninth inning. In his third inning of relief, Appalachian's Taylor Thurber (Mooreville, N.C./Lake Norman) walked USC's Connor Bright to lead off the ninth and Bright moved to second on a sacrifice bunt by pinch-hitter Gordon Gore.

With the winning run in scoring position, Griener, who was given the night off from his normal catching duties, was sent to the plate to pinch hit. The Mountaineers responded by bringing in its No. 1 starting pitcher, Jamie Nunn (Winston-Salem, N.C./Mount Tabor), who was on his regular day to throw on the side, to face the Gamecocks' leader in batting average (.356) and RBI (29).

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Nunn fell behind 2-0 in the count but evened with two-straight strikes, with Griener swinging and missing by a large margin at the second one. After a third ball made the count full, Griener ripped the 3-2 pitch into left field and Bright easily came home from second with the winning run.

South Carolina (25-3) scored its only other run of the ballgame on a two-out RBI single by Bright in the fourth. Appalachian State (8-17) evened it at 1-1 on a two-out RBI single by Jaylin Davis (McLeansville, N.C./Northeast Guilford) in the sixth.

Springs, who got the nod on the mound after having his normal start washed out by inclement weather on Sunday, limited the Gamecocks to just one run on three hits over five innings. The southpaw retired 13 of the 17 batters he faced but didn't figure in the decision.

USC's Beal was just as good, retiring 15-straight after allowing back-to-back singles in the first inning. Still recovering from an injury that kept him out of game action until last week, Beal retired 16 of the 18 batters he faced in his second start of the season but, like Springs, did not figure in the decision.

Thurber (0-3) was charged with the final run to suffer the loss and Vince Fiori (1-0), South Carolina's fourth pitcher of the night, retired all four batters he faced to get the win.

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Davis accounted for two of Appalachian State's five hits while Bright (3-for-4) was responsible for three of South Carolina's nine.

Appalachian State is back in action on Wednesday when it hosts ETSU at Beaver Field at Jim and Bettie Smith Stadium. First pitch is set for 6 p.m.

Photo Courtesy: Jaylin Davis, ASU Athletics