

ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

ATHLETICS

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WONDER BOYS DROP GSC DOUBLEHEADER AT OUACHITA BAPTIST

ARKADELPHIA, Arkansas – Arkansas Tech Wonder Boys Baseball continued its struggles on the road in Gulf South Conference play here Friday by dropping both ends of doubleheader to Ouachita Baptist at Rab Rodgers Field.

Tech dropped the first game 15-14 as the Tigers scored five runs over the final two innings and then the Wonder Boys dropped the nightcap, 12-2.

With the two losses, Tech falls to 19-25 overall and moved into a three-way tie with Harding and OBU for third place in the GSC West Division standings with a 7-7 mark, while OBU improves to 30-14 overall and 7-7 in the league. In addition, Tech has now lost five straight GSC road games since sweeping its three-game series at Christian Brothers on March 28-29.

In the first game, Tech jumped on the board in the top of the first inning on an RBI single by junior rightfielder **Clint Stroud** (Bonham, Texas). The lead grew to 4-0 in the third inning thanks to bases loaded walk by Chase Baran and a two-run single by junior designated hitter **Joe Walton** (Inola, Okla.).

OBU, though, came right back in the bottom of the third inning and sent 11 men to the plate and scored seven runs off of five hits to push in front 7-4. The big hits in the inning were 2-RBI doubles by Blake Lockwood and Drew Maus and three-run homer by Will Goudy off of junior starter **Karl Whitley** (Tucson, Ariz.). Whitley tossed four innings and allowed eight hits and nine runs (six earned runs), while walking two and striking out three.

The Wonder Boys retook the lead in the fourth inning (9-7) as they batted around their order as they scored six runs on six hits. Tech scored on RBI singles by Stroud, junior first baseman **Nick Shoptaw** (Benton, Ark.), redshirt freshman catcher **Landon Sullins** (Harrison, Ark.) and a three-run homer by junior leftfielder **Jeremy Houchin** (Springdale, Ark.).

Tech's lead grew to 12-7 in the fifth inning on a sacrifice fly by Stroud and a balk by OBU reliever Jerry Helferich.

OBU, though, added three runs in the bottom of the fifth thanks to a 2-run homer by Rudy Jovanovski and a solo blast by Kevin Bird off of senior reliever **Barrett Davis** (North Little Rock, Ark.) to pull within 12-10.

Tech extended its lead to 14-10 in the eighth inning on a 2-run homer by Houchin. The homer was the second of game for Houchin and his team-leading 10th of the season. OBU, though, answered Tech's two run in the bottom of the eighth to pull within 14-12.

In the ninth inning, the Tigers took advantage of some wildness from junior reliever **Josh Floriani** (Malvern, Ark.) to score three runs thanks to four walks, a

2-run single by Luke Hardcastle and a bases loaded hit batsman to earn the comeback win.

Floriani (2-2) took the loss as he pitched one inning and allowed two hits and three runs, while walking five and fanning none. Floriani was the fourth Tech pitcher of the game.

Zac Treece (1-1), the third pitcher of the game for the Tigers, earned the win as he pitched two innings and allowed two hits and two runs, while fanning two and walking none.

Senior second baseman **Josh Holloway** (Booneville, Ark.) led the way offensively for Tech as he was 4-for-5 at the plate with four runs scored. In addition to Holloway, Stroud, Sullins and Houchin each had two hits, while Houchin drove in five runs and Stroud delivered three RBIs in the loss.

Six Tigers picked up two hits apiece for OBU in the win, while Goudy drove in four runs and Lockwood scored three times.

OBU finished the game with a 14-13 edge in hits and also committed three errors, while Tech has two errors in the game.

Meanwhile, in the nightcap, Tech once again took an early lead as they used one hit, an OBU error and a wild pitch by Goudy to score two runs in the first inning and push in front 2-0.

The lead would be short-lived as the Tigers combined to score five runs in both the second and third innings to push out to a 10-2 lead. In the second inning, OBU scored five runs on four hits and two Tech errors and then added five runs on two hits, five walks and a hit batsman in the third inning.

In the nightcap, Tech's pitching struggled as four hurlers combined to allow just nine hits, but they walked 11 OBU batters and Tech's defense committed three errors that led to six unearned runs.

The 10 run cushion would be enough for Goudy (9-1) as lefthander tossed a complete game, allowing just three hits and two runs, while walking two and striking out nine. Goudy ended the game retiring 17 of the final 18 batters he faced as the only base runner he allowed from the third inning on came in the sixth inning when sophomore centerfielder **Austin Gwatney** (Sherwood, Ark.) reached on a two-out single to right center.

OBU added single runs in the fourth and fifth inning to make the final margin.

Sophomore **Caleb Powers** (3-3) took the loss to Tech as he tossed 2.1 innings and allowed five hits and six runs (one earned run), while walking four and fanning one. Sophomore **Jordan Gomez** (Murphy, Texas) failed to retire a batter as he allowed one hit and four runs, while walking four in the third inning.

Gwatney, Holloway and Shoptaw all collected hits in the nightcap for the Wonder Boys. OBU's offense was paced by a 3-for-3 effort with 3 RBIs at the plate by Goudy, while Hardcastle finished with one hit, but scored two runs and drove in three in the win.

The two teams will conclude the three-game GSC series on Saturday beginning at 12 p.m. at Rab Rodgers Field. The game will mark Tech's final road GSC game this season as the Wonder Boys will play its final two league series at home.