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Brown's Ninth-Inning Double Lifts A-State to Win at Little Rock

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (5/17/18) – The Arkansas State baseball team was tied with Little Rock 6-6 entering the ninth inning, but a one-out double from Jeremy Brown scored Drew Tipton from second to send the Red Wolves to a 7-6 victory in the series opener against Little Rock Thursday night at Gary Hogan Field.

Justin Garcia entered the game for the Trojans (26-25, 14-13 SBC) to begin the ninth and struck out Tipton on a ball in the dirt, but it skipped away a bit from catcher Kale Emshoff and his throw was wide of the bag at first to allow Tipton to reach. Grant Hawkins bunted Tipton to second and Brown lined a 2-2 pitch over the left fielder's head to plate the winning run.

Peyton Culbertson, who had entered in the eighth inning, allowed a two-out infield hit in the ninth, but struck out Danny Mitchell, Jr., swinging to end the game and earn the win.

A-State (19-30, 10-18 SBC) began the scoring with Tobias Johnson hitting his sixth homer of the season, a two-run shot, in the top of the second. Kyle MacDonald followed with a two-run round-tripper of his own in the fifth inning to put the Red Wolves ahead 4-0. Little Rock was able to get on the board in the bottom half with a sacrifice fly that scored Ryan Benevidez, who led off the inning with a double, which was the Trojans' first hit.

MacDonald stayed hot and hit a solo bomb in the seventh to give him 15 homers on the year and four in the last two games. The Mississauga, Ont., native has tied Michael Clay (1998) and Bobby Pickett (1991) for the second most homers in a single season in school history. However, Little Rock chased Bradey Welsh from the game in the bottom half with two, two-out singles.

Bo Ritter entered for Welsh, but gave up a two-run triple and another RBI single on an infield hit as the home team climbed back within 5-4. Cullen Ray smashed a solo home run to left field in the eighth as it proved to be an important insurance run as Emshoff homered for Little Rock to lead off the bottom of the frame and Marcus Ragan drove home his second run in as many innings on another infield single to tie the game at 6-6.

Little Rock had the bases loaded with two outs, but Culbertson was able to blow a fastball by Chase Coker to keep the score tied 6-6 and set up Brown's heroics.

Welsh delivered his team-high ninth quality start of the season after he allowed three runs on four hits with three strikeouts against two walks in 6.2 innings pitched. Garcia took the loss for the Trojans as starter Chandler Fidel tossed six innings with four runs allowed (three earned) on eight hits.

Brown's three hits led A-State's offense, while MacDonald, Johnson, and Ray each had two apiece. Hawkins added a hit as well, but played excellent defense at shortstop to help the cause. Benevidez had three hits and two runs scored to pace Little Rock's offense.

The two teams return to action in a pivotal game two of the series Friday evening. First pitch from Gary Hogan Field is set for 6 p.m.

For the latest on A-State baseball follow the team by logging onto the Arkansas State Baseball Facebook page or by following the team on Twitter (@AStateBaseball) and Instagram (arkansasstatebaseball).