

## Gems Score Early & Often, Trounce Dragons

Sunday afternoon saw the DuPage Dragons going for their second win in a row. The Quincy Gems had other ideas, and came away with a 9-3 victory at the Lisle Sports Complex at Benedictine University. The win by the Gems brought both teams' records to 7-6 and a tie for second place in the Central Illinois Collegiate League.

The Gems started early in the contest, plating two runs in the first inning. Alex Acheson started the game off with a single, then promptly stole second and advanced to third on a throwing error. Kurtis Muller knocked him in when a bouncing single hopped over the drawn-in infield. After stealing second, Muller was knocked in by a double to deep left, and the Gems were off to a 2-0 lead after one.

Quincy got back at it again, scoring plenty more in the second inning. Andy Whewell dropped a sacrifice bunt to advance two runners to second and third with one out, and the Gems were in business. Acheson, up for the second time in as many innings, knocked his second single, scoring both runners. That spelled a short night for Dragons starter Tom Filip (Baylor). Tom Zelasko (Northern Illinois) came in to relieve him, and after giving up two more RBI hits, retired the next two hitters to end the second. However, the Gems were well ahead after scoring four runs to extend the lead to 6-0.

Gems starter Brian Morrell held the Dragons scoreless through the first three innings. But in the fourth, they finally got the bats to talk. Leftfielder Justin Behm (Northern Illinois) led off the inning with a solo homerun to the opposite for the Dragons first run. Not to be outdone, third baseman Phil Wunderlich (Louisville) followed up with a solo shot of his run, a no-doubter over the rightfield wall. The two homeruns in the inning would double the Dragons' total for the season, and bring DuPage within striking distance with a score of 6-2. But just as it seemed the Dragons had siezed momentum, Mother Nature brought the rains and stopped the game for a 45 minute delay.

After the rain delay, Tom Zelasko came back out on the mound for the Dragons and looked magnificent. He retired all three hitters in the fifth and brought the Dragons back into the dugout ready to hit. They would score one run in the inning to cut the lead in half at 6-3. Second baseman Kevin Tokarski (Illinois State) was hit by a pitch with one out and stole second two pitches later. He came around to score on catcher Matt Behren's (Northern Illinois) RBI double to deep centerfield. But that would be the last run the Dragons would score on the evening.

Tom Zelasko went back to work and blanked the Gems all the way to the ninth inning before they were able to touch him up again. Quincy would plate three runs in the inning, two of which were credited to Zelasko. Devin VanBrooker, who came on to pitch for the Gems in the eighth, gave up a leadoff single in the bottom of the ninth before retiring the next three Dragons and picked up the save for Quincy. Brian Morrell got the win.

The DuPage Dragons are now on a two-day break before returning to action this Wednesday night, June 25th, when they take on the Springfield Sliders at 7:05 pm at the Lisle Sports Complex at Benedictine University. Tickets start at \$6 with kids five and under admitted free. Group rates are available by calling the Dragons' ticket office at 630-241-2255.