

# Late Errors Doom Dragons

For seven innings Friday night, the DuPage Dragons had things under control in their contest against the Danville Dans. But the wheels came off in the eighth, and with the help of three Dragons errors, the Dans came back and defeated DuPage by a score of 8-7. The loss dropped the Dragons to 8-7 on the year, while the Dans improved to 7-8.

Danville got things started in the top of the first. Drew Haynes earned a leadoff walk, and then advanced all the way to third on a failed pickoff attempt. After a fly out, Haynes came across to score on a Dan Kazrowski single to left-center. Another single put runners on first and second for the Dans, but Dragons starter Brian Stroud (Western Michigan) retired the next two hitters to escape the early rally.

Stroud gave up two more hits in the second inning, but completely settled down after that. He shut down the Dans over his last five innings of work, allowing four hits over his seven total innings pitched. All four hits came in the first two innings. In Stroud's last two outings, he has allowed only seven hits in fifteen innings.

The Dragons rallied for three runs in the third and fourth innings. Shortstop Kevin Tokarski (Illinois State) hit a one-out single to start the rally in the third. He advanced to second on a fielder's choice, and that's when the big hits came. First baseman Justin Behm (Northern Illinois) hit a double to score Tokarski and tie the contest. College teammate and Dragons catcher Matt Behren (Northern Illinois) followed suit knocking his own double to right-center, scoring Behm. Third baseman Phil Wunderlich (Louisville) attempted to trade places with Behren when he hit a shot into the right-center gap. He was thrown out at second to end the inning, but not before Behren crossed the plate to give the Dragons a 3-1 lead after three.

The fourth inning saw centerfielder Dave Reynolds (Northern Illinois) get hit by a pitch with one out to start things for the Dragons. A passed ball allowed him to reach second, where he promptly stole third to give the Dragons another potential run only 90 feet away. Rightfielder Jordan Tokarz (Eastern Illinois) came through with the RBI single for the Dragons' fourth run of the game. He put himself in scoring position when he stole second shortly after. Leftfielder Mark Noth (Belmont) drew a walk to put runners on first and second, then Tokarski was able to reach base again, this time courtesy of a throwing error by the pitcher. With the bases loaded, designated hitter Ryan Duffy (Mississippi State) hit a single to right-center to score Tokarz. Behm then hit a sacrifice fly to right for another run before a ground out ended the inning. After four innings, the Dragons had a comfortable 6-1 lead.

DuPage would hold that lead all the way until the eighth inning, but that's when the wheels would come off. Jon Lilly reached base on a fielding error to start the inning. After a single by Tyler Park put runners on first and second, another Dragons error would score Lilly. That would start a streak of six consecutive Dans that would cross the plate. By the end of the inning, Danville had scored seven runs, aided by three Dragons errors, and they owned an 8-6 lead.

The Dragons would rally in the ninth, and it looked like they would have an opportunity for yet another late game comeback victory. Justin Behm led off the inning with a walk. After a fly out, Phil Wunderlich would single to left, putting the tying run on first base. Justin Wilson (Oakland) came in to pinch run for Wunderlich, giving the Dragons a better opportunity to score that run with his good speed. Second baseman Nick Popescu (Bradley) would follow with a walk, and the bases were loaded now for Dave Reynolds. Reynolds reached base on a fielder's choice, scoring one run but recording an out in the process. With two outs and the potential tying run on third, Jordan Tokarz popped out and the Dans escaped with an 8-7 victory.

The DuPage Dragons will play these same Danville Dans Sunday afternoon, June 29th, at the Lisle Sports Complex at Benedictine University. Fans who attend the game are in for a treat, as it will be a doubleheader contest, with the first game starting at 5:05 pm and the second game starting immediately after the conclusion of the first. The doubleheader is a makeup for the rainout game from this past Friday, June 20th. 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.