

# Errors and Double Plays Doom Dragons

Judging by the sunny skies, things looked to be brighter for the DuPage Dragons Sunday afternoon as they took on the Springfield Sliders. But the middle infield tandem of Elliot Soto and Vincente Cafaro helped the Sliders turn four double plays and put a cloud over the Dragons as they went down by a score of 5-1.

For the second straight night, the Dragons got great pitching, this time from starter Brian Stroud (Western Michigan). The game was a great pitchers duel, with the score staying deadlocked at zero through the first five innings. The Dragons didn't struggle for baserunners as they were able to get a runner to first in each of those innings. But three times, the Sliders were able to turn double plays and stop any sign of a threat from DuPage. Springfield second basemen Vincente Cafaro was involved in all three of those, assisting on double plays of 5-4-3, 6-4-3, and a dazzling 4-6-3 that included an eye-popping pirouette from shortstop Elliot Soto.

The Sliders finally broke away from the Dragons in the bottom of the sixth when they put four runs on the board, chasing starter Brian Stroud from the game. Soto got things started with a sharp single to left, followed by a walk and the first of the Dragons' errors loaded the bases. That's when Sliders third baseman Andrew Quinnette broke things open with a bases clearing double and ended the night for Stroud. Reliever Eric Wyman (Illinois-Chicago) seemed to get things under control when he retired the first two batters he faced, and forced a pop up in the infield that looked to retire the side. But the Dragons' third error of the inning led to another run for the Sliders, giving them a 4-0 lead.

The Dragons looked to have a rally going in the eighth inning when they were able to load the bases with no outs. First baseman Nate Pettus (Eastern Oklahoma State CC) started things off with a double, his second hit of the game. That was followed up by back-to-back walks to right fielder Dave Reynolds (Northern Illinois) and shortstop Pete Capetta (Illinois). The Sliders went to the pen and that seemed to do the trick as they were able to get pinch hitter Scott Sexton (Oakland) to pop out for the first out. However in the next at bat, a wild pitch helped the Dragons plate the first of what looked to be many runs in the inning. After a strikeout and a walk to centerfielder Justin Wilson (Oakland), his third of the game, the Dragons had the bases loaded for the second time in the inning. But reliever Jonas Dufek was able to induce a groundout and end the inning, which seemed to take the air out of the Dragons.

The Sliders plated another run in the bottom half of the inning on another Dragon error, their fourth of the game, and brought the score to its final resting place at 5-1. Brian Stroud took the loss, going 5+ innings, allowing four runs, two earned. Sliders starter Brandon Knowling got the win, with Dufek getting the save. The star of the game for the Dragons was Nate Pettus, who went 3-for-4 with two doubles and scored the lone run for the Dragons.

The Dragons return home for their first home game Monday night, June 9th, against the Danville Dans. 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.