

Dragons Drop Third Straight

The DuPage Dragons played the Springfield Sliders Tuesday night in hopes of gaining ground on the first place squad. Instead, the Sliders increased their lead on the Dragons with a 4-3 victory in extra innings. The loss put the Dragons at 16-15 on the season, 3-4 in the second half.

Ryan Copeland (Illinois State) was the starter for the Dragons and he looked good in his seven innings of work. He gave up only two runs on the night, one each in the second and third inning. The Sliders got the scoring started in the bottom of the second. Dennis Vaughn led off the inning with a double, and then two groundouts later, came around as the Sliders' first run. In the third, Alex Urbas would single to start the inning, but advanced to second when there was an error on the play. Ryan Mooney ripped a double down the leftfield line to score Urbas and the Sliders owned a 2-0 lead.

The Dragons would strike back quickly in the top of the fourth. Shortstop and reigning CICAL Co-Player of the Week Kevin Tokarski (Illinois State) tripled to right-centerfield to start the inning. First baseman Dave Reynolds (Northern Illinois) would ground out to second, allowing Tokarski to score and cut the lead in half.

The Dragons would use a two-out rally in the fifth to take the lead in the game. The other CICAL Co-Player of the Week, second baseman Jordan Tokarz (Eastern Illinois), started the rally with a single, and then stole second base. Leftfielder Mark Noth (Belmont) would walk, and then centerfielder Justin Wilson (Oakland) would smack a single to left, scoring Tokarz. Tokarski would get his second hit of the game on a single to centerfield that scored Noth and gave the Dragons their first lead in the game at 3-2.

Brad Riegler (Illinois-Chicago) would come on in relief of Copeland in the eighth. With one out in the inning, Riegler would give up a bunt single to Adam Browett to put a runner on first for the Sliders. Jimmy Swift would follow up with a single to rightfield, but an error on the play allowed Browett to come all the way around to score, tying the game at three.

The two teams kept the score tied after the ninth and the game went into extra innings. The Sliders came up in the bottom of the eleventh after retiring the Dragons in order in the top half of the inning. Tyler Choate would lead things off with a huge double to right-center and the Sliders had a runner in scoring position to start the inning. Urbas reached base on his sacrifice bunt, putting runners on first and third without an out. After a groundout advanced Urbas to second, Bo Kinder would single up the middle, scoring Choate and giving the Sliders the 4-3 victory.

The DuPage Dragons will have a day off tomorrow before continuing their season Thursday, July 17th, when they go on the road to take on the Danville Dans at 7:05 pm. The next home date for the Dragons will be Saturday, July 19th, when they take on the Springfield Sliders for a doubleheader. The first pitch is scheduled for 6:30 pm at the Lisle Sports Complex. Tickets start at \$6 with children five and under admitted free. Group rates are available by calling the Dragons' ticket office at 630-241-2255.