

# Dragons Fall to Gems in Slugfest

The DuPage Dragons continued their hot hitting on Tuesday night as they pounded out another 19 hits en route to scoring 12 runs. Unfortunately, they found themselves on the losing end of a slugfest as they went down to the Quincy Gems by a score of 13-12. The loss dropped the Dragons to 13-12 overall on the season, 0-1 in the second half, while the Gems improved to 11-15 overall, 1-1 in the second half.

The Gems got the scoring started in the first inning. The Gems scored all their runs without the benefit of a hit as the Dragons committed two errors while walking four hitters, allowing seven consecutive hitters to reach base in the inning. When it was over, the Gems had scored four runs for an early lead. The Dragons would get right to work on the comeback in the bottom of the inning. Second baseman Kevin Tokarski (Illinois State) drew a leadoff walk, and then designated hitter Ryan Duffy (Mississippi State) was hit by a pitch to put runners on first and second. Catcher Justin Behm (Northern Illinois) continued his hot hitting as he knocked a two-strike pitch to left-centerfield for a two-RBI double that scored Tokarski and Duffy. After first baseman Phil Wunderlich (Louisville) drew a walk, shortstop Jordan Tokarz (Eastern Illinois) reached on a single that allowed Behm to score. An error on the play had Wunderlich try and score all the way from first, but he was gunned down at the plate for the first out of the inning. Tokarz was caught stealing and a strikeout ended the inning with the Dragons only trailing by one, with the score set at 4-3.

DuPage starter Eric Wyman (Illinois-Chicago) settled down in the second inning as he retired all three hitters in order. The Dragons then tied it up in the bottom of the inning. Leftfielder Pete Capetta (Illinois) smacked a single to right, and then advanced on a single up the middle by third baseman Scott Sexton (Oakland). A wild pitch allowed Capetta to reach third, followed by a stolen base by Wunderlich, his first of the year, which gave the Dragons two runners in scoring position without an out. Centerfielder Justin Wilson (Oakland) drew a walk to load the bases, and then Tokarski, up for the second time in as many innings, hit a sacrifice fly to right, scoring Capetta and tying the game at four. That would be it for Gems starter Greg Hallhake, who would give way to Mitchell Fairley. Fairley retired the next two Dragons hitters to escape the threat and keep the score tied.

Wyman would get another three up, three down inning in the top of the third, and the Dragons would continue to score in the bottom half. Wunderlich led off the inning with a single to right, followed by a Tokarz double that would put runners in scoring position. Rightfielder Matt Behren (Northern Illinois) followed with an RBI single to score Wunderlich and put runners on first and third. Capetta would reach on a fielder's choice that saw Behren reach second base while also scoring Tokarz before the Gems would finally record their first out of the inning. Wilson would then ripped a two-RBI double to right-center to give the Dragons the 8-4 lead.

The Gems would finally add to their score in the top of the fourth. The first three hitters would reach base on consecutive walks to load the bases. Michael Adamson would hit a comebacker to the mound, which Wyman fielded and flipped to home for the force out. The Gems would push across a run when an attempted double play only got one runner for two outs in the inning and Quincy's fifth run of the game. Wyman would get out of the inning and that would be it for him as the score sat at 8-5. However, the Gems had yet to record a hit.

Surprisingly, no runs came across for either squad in the fifth. Dragons reliever Tom Filip (Baylor) got out of a jam in the top half of the inning while DuPage was retired in order in the bottom half. But Filip wasn't as lucky in the sixth, and that's when the Gems would take control. Ken Burns

would leadoff the inning with a double, followed by a walk to Adamson and a single by Kurtis Muller to load the bases. Tyler Goodro would step to the plate and send the 2-0 offering from Filip over the leftfield wall for a grand slam that would give the Gems a 9-8 lead. Tom Zelasko (Northern Illinois) would come in to relieve Filip and would give up one more run before the Dragons would escape the inning trailing by two.

The Dragons would again respond in the bottom of the inning. With one out, Duffy would get hit by a pitch for the second time in the game. Two hitters later, Wunderlich would smack his second single of the game to put runners on first and second. That's when Tokarz would get his third hit of the night, a single to left-center that scored Duffy and brought the Dragons to within one with the score at 10-9.

Quincy would add to their lead in the top of the eighth as they were able to put across another three runs. Back-to-back one-out singles by Adamson and Muller advanced to second and third on a fielder's choice to make it two outs in the inning. That's when another set of consecutive singles would bring across the three runs. Myers hit a two-RBI single and advanced to second on the throw, then was knocked in on Andy Petz's single to left to give the Gems the lead at 13-9. The Dragons would get to work again when a two-out rally got them one more run. Wilson got a two-out single, and then came all the way around to score on a single by Tokarski when an error by the outfielder allowed the ball to get all the way to the wall. Tokarski reached third, but Duffy's deep fly to center was caught near the wall and the inning was over.

The Dragons were able to hold the Gems scoreless over the last two innings and mounted a great last-ditch effort at a comeback in the bottom of the ninth. With the score still at 13-10, Behren would lead off the inning with a single. Capetta would follow up with another single before a wild pitch put both runners on second and third. An RBI groundout by pinch hitter Nick Popescu (Bradley) would score Behren before another ground out would bring up the top of the order. Back-to-back singles by Tokarski and Duffy would bring across Capetta and bring the Dragons to within one. But Gems reliever Kevin Lee came in to strike out the only hitter he faced and the Gems squeaked out a 13-12 victory.

The loss Tuesday night earned the two teams a split in the two-game series. The Dragons scored 25 runs in the two games off 40 hits. It marks the most runs they've scored in a two-game span this year. Tokarz (1 RBI) and Tokarski (2 RBI) were the two big hitters for DuPage as they were both 3-for-5 with an extra base hit and a run scored.

The DuPage Dragons next return home on Friday, July 11th, when they face the Dubois Bombers at 7:05 pm at the Lisle Sports Complex at Benedictine University. It will be the beginning of a short three-game weekend homestand for the Dragons. 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.