

Dragons jump on top, but can't hold lead as they drop second in a row to Dans

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Lisle, IL

Geoff Steele

After a rout at the hands of the Dans the night prior, the Dragons would be looking to get back into the win column as they sent their All-Star Casey Webber, (Tinley Park, IL/Western Michigan), to the hill. Though the Dragons are mathematically eliminated from playoff contention, they would look to play the role of spoiler as the season comes to an end.

Webber got off to a great start as he struck out the lead off man for the Dans, Chris Lewellyn. That was when he would run into trouble. An error allowed the previous nights hero, Austin Nola, to reach first base, then a single from Jason Nappi and a double down the left field line from Dans first baseman Dabo Worthington would plate the first run of the game for the Dans. Webber would recover to strike out the next two hitters and limit the damage.

The Dragons would put together an inning of their own in the bottom of the first, but failed to push a run across. A single from Adam Davis, (Bloomington, IL/University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign), through the hole at short and a walk to Dave Reynolds, (Orland Park, IL/Northern Illinois), would put runners on first and second with only one out. But subsequent flyouts by Grant Fillipitch, (LaGrange Park, IL/Butler), and Barret Serrato, (West Chicago, IL/Purdue), would send the Dragons back to the dugout. Serrato gave his ball a ride but a nice twisting catch by the Dans left fielder Scott Schauer would leave the Dragons empty handed.

Webber would begin to settle down after a rough first inning and finish the second unscathed, the only blemish being another error by the Dragons defense. This one would not hurt the Dragons as Webber would get the following hitter to ground out to end the inning.

The Dragons would start the home half of the second inning looking to even the score and with one out Matthew Mirabal, (Chicago, IL/Illinois State), would get hit by a pitch and two pitches later he would steal second to put a runner in scoring position yet again for the Dragons. Two consecutive strikeouts by Dans starter Jacob Lee would end the home half of the second, the Dragons still trailing 1-0.

Webber would continue to roll into the third. He would strikeout the first batter he faced, induce a flyout from Worthington and after a walk, he would get another flyout to end the Dans half of the third.

In the Dragons half of the third is where things got really interesting. With one out in the inning Adam Davis would single to left field. Dave Reynolds would then hit a slow rolling ground ball between the first and second basemen and into right field, allowing Davis to reach third base. On the first pitch to Grant Fillipitch, Reynolds broke for second. As the throw from the catcher headed toward second base, Davis broke for home plate. The relay throw home skipped into the catcher's mitt allowing Davis to slide around the tag and tie the game at 1's. Reynolds would

continue to head to third and the throw from the Dans catcher slid under the third baseman's mitt, Reynolds scampered home to put the Dragons up by 1 run. After that play ended, Fillipitch would walk but a strikeout and a liner at the second basemen would end the inning. Dragons now lead 2-1.

The fourth is where Webber would run into some trouble. After getting a flyout to the right fielder, two consecutive walks would put the Dans in business. A flyout to Reynolds had the lefty from Western Michigan looking as though he would get out of the inning with no damage done. But Austin Nola would single to score one run and even the score at 2 apiece. Webber retired the next batter himself to get out it.

Matt Mirabal would leadoff the Dragons fourth by successfully laying a bunt down the third base line and beating the throw to first for a single. He would then steal second for his second stolen base of the game, and tenth on the season. A walk to Dragons leftfielder Andrew Brauer, (Bolingbrook, IL/College of DuPage), would put two runners on with no outs. A sacrifice bunt by Sean Flanagan, (Downers Grove, IL/Iowa), would allow the runners to advance and put the Dragons in business again. Adam Davis continued his torrid streak at the plate by singling into left field to drive home both Mirabal and Brauer. The Dragons regained the lead 4-2.

Webber cruised through the fifth with ease recording two more strikeouts to run his evening total to 6.

In the Dragons half of the fifth, Fillipitch would continue to do what he does best and drove a double to the right centerfield gap with no outs. A Barrett Serrato groundout would advance Fillipitch to third. Bryan Roberts, (Lisle, IL/University of Illinois Champaign Urbana), the Dragons DH, would record his first hit and RBI of the season when he would hit a shallow looper into right field that was just out of reach for the first baseman. The Dragons adding to their lead, the score now 5-2.

The Dans would get one back in the top of the sixth. Dans right fielder Ryan Van Amburg would lead off with a single. A pickoff attempt by Webber would escape the grasp of Reynolds and watch Van Amburg advance to second. Two pitches later a passed ball would allow him to move up 90 feet to third base with one out. A sacrifice fly by Dans center fielder Byron Williams would plate Van Amburg. Webber would get a fly ball to end the inning with the Dans inching closer, the score now 5-3 Dragons.

The Dragons would look to get that run back in the sixth when Brian Martin, (Glen Ellyn, IL/College of DuPage), would reach base on a bunt single with one out. Reynolds would walk and Grant Fillipitch would hit a ground ball to the third baseman that would be bobbled just enough to allow all the runners to be safe. With the bases loaded, Barrett Serrato would pop up to end the inning.

In the seventh, the Dragons would call on Tom Zelasko, (Orland Park, IL/Northern Illinois), to relieve Casey Webber. An error to start the inning was not a good sign of things to come the Dans would plate another run on a fly ball that the right fielder Matt Mirabal appeared to lose in the lights. He would recover and cut down Green attempting to take second base. One run

scored and left the score at 5-4, Dragons still lead by one.

The Dragons would fail to get an offense going in the seventh after Matt Mirabal reached for the third time in the game on a single and advanced to second on a single by Andrew Brauer. But that was all the further they would get as a fly ball and a fielders choice ended the inning with the Dragons clinging to a one run lead.

The eighth inning would spell doom for the Dragons. With Zelasko still on the mound, a double and a single would place runners on the corners for the Dans with no outs. A sharply hit single that glanced off the glove of Zelasko skipped into center field to allow one run to score and the Dans to tie the score at 5. A well placed bunt moved every runner up one base and loaded the bases for Austin Nola. He would ground to third baseman Sean Flanagan who would throw home to cut down one run. A single by Jason Nappi would plate one more and give the Dans a lead they would not relinquish.

The Dragons half of the eighth would prove uneventful as they were set down in order. Two fly balls and ground out to the pitcher would do the Dragons in. They would need to hold the Dans and muster some offense in the bottom of the ninth to walk away with a win.

Zelasko did his part in the ninth by getting the Dans to go down one, two, three.

It was now up to the offense to plate one run and send this game into extras. Serrato grounded out to the pitcher to start the inning and Roberts hit a liner that was snagged by the third baseman. Now down to their last out, Matt Mirabal hit a drive to center, but it was caught to end the game. Dragons lose 6-5 to the Danville Dans.

The Dragons will look to get back to their winning ways tonight when they visit Springfield to take on the Sliders. We apologize for the inconvenience, but there will be no broadcast for tonight's game.

Saturday night will be the last game of the season for the Dragons. We invite all of you to join us that evening. Ticket information for the Dragons home games is available at www.dupagedragons.com or by calling the Dragons ticket office at 630-241-2255.