

LINEUP

MLB

Philadelphia at New York (NL)
7:35 p.m., CSN
Pittsburgh vs. Colorado
7:05 p.m., FSN

Ex-PSU catcher Heath to return

Though Ben Heath's Penn State career ended May 22, the former Penn State catcher will return to Medlar Field at Lubrano Park this weekend as a member of the Tri-City Valley Cats, the short-season Class A affiliate of the Houston Astros.



Heath

Heath, who was selected by the Astros in the fifth round (153rd overall) of this past June's draft, set the Nittany Lions single season home run record with 18 homers in 2010.

He is tied for fifth in the NYPL with six home runs entering Thursday, and owns a .459 slugging percentage.

Men's soccer No. 16 in preseason poll

The Nittany Lions were ranked No. 16 on College Soccer News' preseason Top 30 poll Thursday.

Akron, who Penn State plays at Jeffrey Field Oct. 13, was ranked No. 1 while Big Ten teams Ohio State (No. 10), Northwestern (No. 18), Michigan State (No. 19) and Indiana (No. 21) are also ranked.

Title game will be played in Indy

The first Big Ten championship football game will be in Indianapolis at Lucas Oil Stadium.

The game is scheduled to be played in December 2011.

Lucas Oil Stadium was one of several sites that expressed interest in hosting the game, including Detroit's Ford Field.

Big Ten commissioner Jim Delany indicated that a more thorough search for venues after the 2011 game will begin soon.

The conference still has to negotiate a one-year agreement with Indiana Sports Corp and Lucas Oil Stadium to host the game.

Awarding Rangers to Ryan right move

There's no one better to take over the Texas Rangers.

Mark Cuban would have been a lot of fun, but he has his Dallas Mavericks to tend to. No, it had to be Nolan Ryan.

Ryan is without doubt the franchise's most famous player. He also knows what he's doing as far as building the team. The Rangers' eight-game lead in the division can attest to that.

Though Cuban has more money to throw around, Ryan's group was able to get the team out of bankruptcy.

A successful product, and a roster of stars, leads to revenue.

Baseball needs the Rangers in Texas. After all, everyone knows the Astros are just a farm team for the Phillies anyway.

Q: How many sacks did Broncos LB Elvis Dumervil record last season?

Thursday's answer: Tom Gordon surrendered Alex Rodriguez's first career homerun.

Spikes benefit from error



Spikes first baseman Matt Curry connects on a pitch against Williamsport earlier this season.

By Jake Kaplan
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Gerlis Rodriguez laid down a sacrifice bunt, attempting to put two runners in scoring position in the bottom of the ninth.

But the bunt by the State College Spikes designated hitter ended up doing more than that.

Staten Island Yankees catcher Nick McCoy over-threw first base, and Spikes left fielder Pat Irvine walked home to score, as State College walked off with a 3-2 win Thursday night at Medlar Field at Lubrano Park. With the victory, the Spikes (23-24) snapped an eight-game losing streak against the Yankees (21-22).

"It just shows the fight that we have," State College starting pitcher Zack Von Rosenberg said among a jovial clubhouse. "The game was tight in the late innings, and we just found a way to win. That's what it came down to."

The State College dugout and bullpen emptied after Irvine crossed home plate, mobbing

Rodriguez in the infield.

Rodriguez' sacrifice wasn't the first of its kind in a ninth inning that turned out better than expected. After Irvine hit an infield single to start the bottom of the ninth, second baseman Walker Gourley tried to move him over. Gourley put a ball down the first base line that appeared to be going foul. Staten Island's pitcher and first baseman watched it as it sat right on the chalk in fair territory. Meanwhile, Gourley took first base.

"Man, I thought it was going to go foul," Gourley said. "But it didn't so we'll take it."

Von Rosenberg was a big factor in the win. The 19-year-old supplied his best start of his young professional career, throwing six shutout innings, and allowing merely two hits. It was just the second time all year a Spikes' hurler has gone six innings — Tyler Waldron did it July 24.

Behind Von Rosenberg's stellar outing, the Spikes were able to get out to an early lead.

State College center fielder Mel Rojas Jr. helped spark the team right out of the gate, smacking a leadoff double off the center field wall. Rojas came around to score on a groundout, giving the Spikes a 1-0 lead.

The Spikes increased their lead

when third baseman Kelvin Brown doubled and Rojas singled to bring him in to start the inning.

The lead slipped away in the seventh, however. Casey Scudder relieved Von Rosenberg, and the hits and two errors kept the Spikes were in a 2-2 deadlock. The score remained that way until the walkoff in the ninth.

State College manager Gary Robinson was proud of the way his team handled diversity. The Spikes have struggled of late, losing eight games coming in, including a 10-0 loss against Staten Island Wednesday night.

"Adversity is something that really is good," Robinson said. "I mean it's really good. It's something that all of us, but particularly, baseball players go through. And how you deal with that adversity, defines you."

The Spikes, who play the Yankees one last time in the rubber match of their three game series at 7:05 tonight, hope this game is a turning point in their season.

"The last week or so, it's been a grind," catcher Matt Skirving said. "And we've come up short a couple times, so being able to get a win like this is huge."

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Pitcher tosses six shutout innings

By Joe Kurtek
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

Starting off the game with back-to-back strikeouts, Zack Von Rosenberg looked poised for a strong performance.

Von Rosenberg, a 2009 sixth-round pick of the Pittsburgh Pirates, used strong command of his fastball to keep hitters guessing throughout the game.

In a six-inning performance, Von Rosenberg allowed only two hits and recorded three strikeouts en route to one of the best outings of his professional career.

"I got to watch the night before with the hitters tendencies and what they do and was able to have an approach with knowing what they're trying to accomplish," Von Rosenberg said. "It was just good that I got to perform the way I wanted to and fortunately my team was behind me making great plays."

Von Rosenberg carried a no-hitter to the top of the fifth.

"He located all of his pitches," catcher Matt Skirving said. "He pitched ahead in the count which makes a huge difference and just did a good job of keeping hitters off-balance and guessing."

Von Rosenberg would allow his first hit of the night to Staten Island right fielder Mike Ferraro. Later in the inning, Casey Stevenson would single to right but a cutoff by Spikes shortstop G.H. Ngeogu would force Stevenson into a run-down. He was tagged out before Ferraro could reach home.

Von Rosenberg became the second Spikes starter to reach the sixth inning this year as Tyler Waldron accomplished the feat in July 24th's win against the Auburn Doubledays.

"I haven't done that in over a year now due to pitch counts and wanting to keep our arms healthy, which is understandable because we haven't pitched this long into a season," Von Rosenberg said. "It was definitely awesome to be able to pitch into the sixth."

Forcing Yankees catcher Nick McCoy to flyout to left to start the sixth, Von Rosenberg continued to cruise.

Despite walking left fielder Shane Brown, Von Rosenberg got centerfielder Eduardo Sosa to hit into a 6-4-3 double play to end the inning and his night.

"I've never seen him compete like that and that's a great sign," Spikes manager Gary Robinson said.

Kubel's dome shot gives Twins series

By The Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — This popup took a bad hop.

Jason Kubel's two-out pop clanked off a catwalk high above Tropicana Field and fell behind the

pitcher's mound for a go-ahead single in the ninth inning, a true dome run that sent the Minnesota Twins past the Tampa Bay Rays 8-6 Thursday.

"I'll take it," Kubel said. "Get a run in, that's all that matters. Anyway it works. I'm happy with that."

After the Rays scored six times in the eighth, capped by pinch-hitter Jason Bartlett's grand slam that made it 6-all, the Twins rallied in most unusual fashion.

Minnesota put runners at the corners and Kubel lofted his pop. Tampa Bay second baseman Reid Brignac and shortstop Bartlett backed up and got in position to catch the ball, but it struck the highest metal catwalk — about 190 feet over the field — and changed direction.

No Rays fielder could recover in time to catch the ball before it landed 15 feet behind the mound.

"At the last second, at the top, it hit the catwalk and dropped straight down," Bartlett said.

"Reid and I were both at the edge

of the dirt right when it hit so I don't think anybody had a chance."

By rule, the ball was in play and there were no arguments or discussions. More than 100 balls have hit the four catwalks since the ballpark opened in 1998, but only once before had one struck the highest "A" ring — Carlos Pena did it in a Twins' victory on May 31, 2009. Minnesota pitcher Jose Mijares caught that popup and toppled onto his stomach.

"It's just one of those things," Brignac said. "It's part of our home stadium and we've got to deal with it."

The odd ball that fell fair dropped the Rays out of a first-place tie with the idle New York Yankees in the AL East. Tampa Bay has lost only three times in its last 13 games, including a 13-inning, 2-1 loss to Minnesota on Wednesday night.

"It pretty much can't happen any place but here," Rays manager Joe Maddon said.

"I know it works both ways but to lose a game in a pennant situation like that because of a roof indicates why there's a crying need for a new ballpark."

For the Twins, it was a bit of catwalk revenge.

Tampa Bay beat the Twins 4-3 in 10 innings on May 2, 2007, as Pena started the winning rally with an infield single that struck the second-highest "B" ring.



Rays shortstop Jason Bartlett tries to track down Jason Kubel's popup.

Brian Blanco/AP