

IBAC Baseball Alumni News



Mike Lopez

GAME ONE BOX SCORE

GAME TWO BOX SCORE

LA MIRADA, Calif. --- Sophomore catcher Mike Lopez continued his red-hot play as of late, belting a pair of home runs including the game-winner in the bottom of the eighth as Biola came from behind to beat No. 24 Fresno Pacific 7-5 in the second game after a wild, high-scoring game won by Fresno 31-19 to start Wednesday's doubleheader.

The Eagles end the day at 23-17 overall and remain at .500 with a 15-15 conference mark. The Sunbirds are now 25-13, 17-13 in the GSAC.

The first game was a wild one, featuring a total of 50 runs, 54 hits, 421 pitches, a grand slam by each team and three separate innings where a team scored 10 or more runs.

But the second was a bit more normal by all standards, though Biola did come from behind with five runs in the final two innings to earn the doubleheader split.

The Eagles got into a bit of trouble early in the second game as it appeared as though the Sunbirds would continue their offensive assault. Fresno Pacific took advantage of a pair of Biola errors to score once in the first only to see Biola tie the score on a solo home run by Mac Sullivan.

Fresno Pacific would then add three run in the top of the third inning, pounding out four hits in five at-bats to take a 4-1 lead. The Eagles closed the gap to one on a home run by Garrett Leon in the bottom of the third to make it 4-2 only to see the Sunbirds respond with a solo homer by Blaine Taylor to stretch the lead back to three.

The score would stay that way until the bottom of the seventh inning when Lopez hit the first of his two home runs in the game, a solo shot to make it 5-3.

After again holding the Sunbirds scoreless in the top of the eighth, Biola would rally in the bottom of the frame to tie and eventually take the lead. With two out and runners at first and second, Brian Loard came up with a clutch double down the left-field line to tie the game at 5-5. Lopez then came up and blasted his second home run in as many innings, a two-run shot to dead centerfield to put Biola up 7-5.

Dale Harder who came on in relief in the seventh, then pitched a perfect top of the ninth to secure the victory. Harder allowed just one hit over the final three innings of the game to keep the Eagles in it after a strong start by Kyle Atkins, who was making his first collegiate start. Atkins allowed four earned runs over six innings, recording eight strikeouts.

The "low-scoring", 12-run game was a breath of fresh air after the wild first game. The first game started out bad for the Eagles who fell behind 13-1 after three innings and still trailed 18-7 heading into the bottom of the seventh. But Biola scored 12 runs in the bottom of the seventh to take a 19-18 lead only to see Fresno respond with 11 runs in the top of the eighth to blow the game wide open.

Fresno Pacific jumped all over Biola starter Mike Frisina, scoring two runs in the first, one in the second and then adding 10 in the third--eight of which were charged to Frisina. The senior was unable to record an out in the third as the first eight batters reached and eventually scored against him.

The big blow of the frame came off the bat of Andrew Douglas, who hit a grand slam home run to cap the scoring. It was his second home run of the inning.

Biola slowly started to work its way back into the game with a run in the bottom of the third, then after Fresno failed to score in the fourth, the Eagles added five more. The five-run fourth was capped by Biola's grand slam which came off the bat of Sullivan and made it a 13-6 game.

The Sunbirds would add one run in each of the fifth and sixth innings to go on top 15-6. Biola scored once in the bottom of the sixth on a home run by Leon, but trailed 18-7 after Fresno Pacific scored three times in the top of the seventh.

But the Biola bats came alive in the seventh as the Eagles sent 18 batters to the plate and scored 12 runs to take the lead. The Sunbirds had a chance to limit the damage early in the inning. With just two runs in a routine double play ball was to second was bobbled, going down for an error and allowing the inning to continue.

Biola took advantage after that slowly chipping away. Loard had another big hit in the frame, hitting a two-run double late in the frame to cut the gap to 18-15. After Michael Andrews was hit by a pitch, the merry-go-round began with three wild pitches to plate Loard and move Andrews to third. Armando Arzate then drove home Andrews to make it an 18-17 game, with Leon tying the game with a single to score Arzate.

The Eagles then loaded the bases on a walk and hit by pitch, then received a gift run as Benji Sutherland was hit by a pitch to force in the go-ahead run.

But Biola was unable to hold the lead as the Sunbirds jumped all over Alex Brueske, who came on to pitch in the top of the eighth. Case Rigby wasted no time tying the game, jumping on Brueske's third pitch to make it a 19-19 game. After an infield error, Douglas crushed his third home run of the game, a two-run shot to center to put Fresno back on top. The Sunbirds would end up scoring eight more runs after that and adding two in the ninth to win 31-19.

The final tally proved to be quite the record-setting affair. Fresno Pacific's 31 hits were just two shy of the NAIA record and the 50 combined runs is among the most ever in an NAIA game. The 31 runs allowed by the Eagles were the most ever, three more than the previous record set in a 28-8 loss to US International back in 1980.

All but one starter in the game had at least one hit. Douglas went 6-for-8 in the game with three home runs, two doubles, six runs scored and nine RBIs. Dwight Nixon was 6-for-7 with a pair of doubles and three runs scored.

For the Eagles, Vinnie Fayard went 5-for-6 in the game with a double and three runs scored.

Lopez, who collected one hit in two at-bats in the first game, finished the day 4-for-6 with four RBIs. He is now 9-for-11 over the course of his last four games with a double, two home runs, six RBIs and three runs scored.

The Eagles close out the four-game series with a doubleheader up at Fresno Pacific on Saturday (Apr. 24) with first pitch scheduled for 12:00 p.m.