



STANFORD ATHLETICS

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*Chris Lewis' two-out, two-RBI double in the eighth proves to be game-winner

No. 16 Stanford Holds On At USC, 7-6

Los Angeles, Calif. – Chris Lewis' two-RBI double with two outs in the top of the eighth inning proved to be the game-winner as No. 16 Stanford (11-5) held off a rally in the bottom of the ninth inning in a 7-6 win over USC (10-10) in the opener of a three-game non-conference series at Dedeaux Field. Lewis (3-4, 2B, 3 RBI) had a career-high-tying three hits and a season-high three RBI to lead the Cardinal offense. Erik Davis earned his first save of the season and second of his career by retiring both batters he faced after coming into the game with the Cardinal holding on to a precarious 7-6 lead with the bases loaded and only one out in the bottom of the ninth inning.

"It wasn't pretty, but we battled," said Stanford head coach Mark Marquess.

"Any time you have a one-run game you have to be on the high end of it," added Lewis. "It's a morale thing because any time you get beat by one run, you second guess and ask what you could have done differently. So when you're on the good end of it, you have to embrace it and carry it on to the next day."

Joey August (2-4, HR, 2 RBI) and Chris Minaker (2-5, 2B, 2 RBI) drove in Stanford's other four runs. August belted his first collegiate homer with a critical two-run shot in the seventh that expanded Stanford's lead to 7-2, while Minaker continued his red-hot hitting by extending his season-high hit streak to nine games.

Nolan Gallagher, the second of four Stanford relievers, was credited with the win on the mound to improve to 2-0. Gallagher was not charged with a run in his 1.0 innings of work although he did allow one of his two inherited runners to score and gave up one hit while striking out two.

Michael Taylor started the eighth inning Cardinal rally that snapped a 5-5 tie by drawing a leadoff walk off losing pitcher John Dunn (1-1), who allowed a pair of runs on two hits and two walks with one strikeout in his 1.2 innings of work. Taylor then moved to second on a sacrifice bunt by John Hester before Randy Molina drew a walk and Dunn balked Taylor and pinch-runner Jeff Whitlow to second and third, setting up Lewis' clutch two-run double two batters later.

"That was obviously a big hit for Chris in that spot," said Marquess.

USC, who left 12 runners on in the game, made it interesting in both the eighth and ninth innings but were shut down on both occasions by a Cardinal reliever.

In the eighth, Gallagher gave up a leadoff single to Darin Vieira and hit pinch-hitter Matt Underwood to put the Trojans in business. He managed to strikeout Hector Estrella when he failed to get a sacrifice bunt down with two strikes but then was removed in favor of Sean Ratliff (1.0 IP, 4 H, 1 H, 1 ER, 1 SO), who retired Cusick on a grounder for the second out striking out Sharpe to leave runners stranded at second and third.

The Trojans knocked Ratliff around in the ninth with four consecutive singles after Hankerd had flied out to start the inning. Duda started the rally with a one-out single and was followed by singles from Frost, pinch-hitter Josh Fogel and Vieira to close the gap to 7-6 and load the bases to put the tying run on third and the winning run on second with just one out. But, Davis came on in relief of Ratliff and shut the door by getting J.J. Owen to fly out to right and Estrella to hit into a game-ending fielders choice.

Lucas Duda (3-5, RBI) and Vieira (3-5, RBI) both had three hits and drove in a run for the Trojans, while Baron Frost (2-3, 2 RBI) had a pair of hits and drove in two runs, and Cyle Hankerd (2-4, RBI) had a pair of hits and one RBI. Daniel Perales doubled and drove in the other USC run.

The Cardinal was able to touch USC ace Ian Kennedy for a season-high five runs on nine hits and one walk with only a season-low two strikeouts in his 6.1 frames of work.

"We hit the ball well against a good pitcher tonight," explained Marquess.

USC got on the scoreboard in the bottom of the first inning off Stanford starter Greg Reynolds (6.0 IP, 7 H, 3 R, 3 ER, 4 BB, 4 SO), taking a 1-0 lead when Blake Sharpe drew a one-out walk, moved to third on a single by Hankerd and scored on a two-out RBI single from Frost.

Minaker put Stanford ahead, 2-1, in the top of the third with a clutch two-out, two-RBI double that scored Lewis and August, who had singled earlier in the inning.

Stanford made it 3-1 in the fourth on a one-out RBI single from Lewis that scored Molina, who had started the rally with a one-out walk before moving to third on a single from Brendan Domaracki and subsequent error by Perales in right field.

USC inched back to within 3-2 with a run in the sixth. Frost drew a one-out walk and scored on Perales' RBI double to the right field gap. Vieira followed with a single to put Trojans on first and third with just one out but the Cardinal escaped further damage when Reynolds got pinch-hitter Kyle Degener to roll into an odd inning-ending double play. Degener hit a ground ball to Lewis that the Cardinal second baseman had come out of his glove while attempting to field but the ball rolled right to Minaker who was covering second and tagged the bag before throwing on to first to complete the double play.

Cord Phelps singled with one out in the top of seventh before August ended Kennedy's evening with his two-run shot over the right field wall to put the Cardinal ahead, 5-2.

USC came right back to tie the game with three runs in the bottom of the seventh. Reynolds started the inning by issuing a leadoff walk to Estrella before reliever Jeremy Bleich (0.1 IP, 1 H, 2 R, 1 ER, 1 BB) came in and gave up another free pass to Matt Cusick before a sacrifice bunt by Sharpe put runners at second and third with one out. Hankerd was credited with a sacrifice fly when he hit a fly ball to Taylor that the Cardinal rightfielder dropped, leaving Trojans on first and third with still just one out. Duda followed with an RBI single to cut the Stanford advantage to 5-4 and make Bleich's outing a short one as Gallagher came in to try and put out the fire. Frost hit another fly ball to Taylor in right and Hankerd tagged from third to score, just beating Taylor's throw home on a close play at the plate.

The teams are scheduled to continue the series on Saturday and Sunday with both games scheduled to begin at 1:00 pm, PT. RHP Matt Manship (0-1, 3.97) is slated to take the hill for Stanford on Saturday against USC RHP Ryan Cook (0-2, 7.20). USC is scheduled to go with LHP Tommy Milone (4-0, 4.45) on Sunday, while the Cardinal has not announced a probable starter.

NOTES

- Stanford improved to 5-2 in one-run games this season and played its third consecutive one-run contest
- Chris Minaker extended his season-high hit streak to nine games and his streak of games and is hitting a torrid .512 (21-41) during the streak ... Minaker continues to lead the team with a .382 batting average increased his team-leading RBI total to 21 with a pair of RBI, marking the fourth straight game he had at least two RBI and the fifth straight contest he had at least one
- Chris Lewis' three hits were a season-high and tied a career-high (third time), while his three RBI were a season-high
- Joey August hit his first career homer with his two-run shot in the seventh
- Chris Minaker's five assists tied the most by a Cardinal player this season
- Stanford won for the seventh time in its last nine contests
- Stanford's bats remained hot with the club's sixth straight double-digit hit game, improving the Cardinal's batting average to a season-high .263
- Randy Molina made his first career start for the Cardinal when he was in the starting lineup at first base
- Cord Phelps extended his career-high hit streak to five games with a seventh inning single
- Friday's game was played before the smallest crowd to witness a Stanford game this season when just 343 fans showed up on a cold evening where the temperature was just 50 degrees for the first pitch