



STANFORD ATHLETICS

MEDIA RELATIONS

Arrillaga Family Sports Center
Stanford University
Stanford, CA 94305
(650) 723-4418 • FAX (650) 725-2957
Website: gostanford.com

BASEBALL RECAP

Contact: Kyle McRae (650-725-2959, mcr@stanford.edu)

Web: <http://gostanford.cstv.com/sports/m-basebl/recaps/031007aaa.html>

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*Stanford drops first home game of the season and second straight overall

No. 20 USC Scores Five Runs In Eighth Inning To Beat Stanford, 11-8

Stanford, Calif. – No. 20 USC (14-8) scored five unearned runs in the top of the eighth inning on the way to an 11-8 victory over Stanford (10-7) in the opener of a three-game non-conference series at Sunken Diamond on Friday. Stanford had tied the contest at 6-6 in the bottom of the seventh when Sean Ratliff (2-4, HR, 2 RBI) connected on a two-run homer and Michael Taylor followed him two batters later with a solo shot. The loss was Stanford's first of the 2007 season at Sunken Diamond, where the Cardinal had began its home slate with a 9-0 record.

USC's 21 hits were the most by a Cardinal opponent this season as the Trojans also took advantage of a season-high four Cardinal errors to score a total of six unearned runs. Michael Torres (4-5, 2B, 2 RBI) led the USC offense with four hits while three additional players – Grant Green (3-5, 2B, 3B, RBI, SB), Robert Stock (3-5, RBI) and Nick Buss (3-6, RBI) – had three each. Hector Estrella (2-4, 2 RBI) and Lucas Duda (2-4, RBI) added two apiece.

USC's game-deciding eighth inning rally started when Buss led off with a single that ended the day for losing pitcher Tom Stilson (2.2 IP, 4 H, 2 R, 1 SO). Green greeted reliever David Stringer (0.2 IP, 5 H, 4 R) with a single to put Trojans on first and second base before Stringer got Cusick to fly out for the first out of the inning. The key play of the game followed when Stanford shortstop Cord Phelps couldn't get a grip on the ball while trying to start a potential inning-ending double play, leaving the bases full of Trojans. Duda followed with a sacrifice fly to score Buss and put the Trojans back in front, 7-6. Torres then started a succession of four straight hits against Stringer with a two-RBI double to plate Green and pinch-runner Will Rice. Stock then singled Torres home and scored two batters later on an RBI single from Roberto Lopez before Stringer finally retired Buss to end the inning.

Joey August (3-5) equaled a career-best and recorded a season-best three hits for the Cardinal, while Adam Sorgi (2-3) had a pair of hits and reached base in all four of his plate appearances, and Brent Milleville was 2-for-5 with a double and an RBI. Taylor drove in two runs.

USC reliever Hector Rabago (1.2 IP, 6 H, 3 R, 3 ER, 1 SO) picked up the win to improve to 2-0, while Stilson (1-1) suffered his first collegiate loss despite not allowing an earned run.

Paul Koss gave up a leadoff walk in the Cardinal ninth before retiring the final three batters to record his ninth save of the season and the 29th in his career.

USC got on the scoreboard first with a pair of runs in the top of the second inning off Stanford starter Jeffrey Inman (4.1 IP, 11 H, 5 R, 5 ER, 2 BB, 1 SO) when Mike O'Neill and Buss came through with back-to-back two-out run scoring hits after Torres had singled to lead off the inning and moved to third on a wild pitch and a groundout.

Stanford got one run back in the bottom of the second by taking advantage of a key USC error. August started the inning off with a leadoff single and Brian Juhl drew a walk before Torres dropped a soft liner into shallow rightcenter field to load the bases with no outs. The inning could have been bigger for the Cardinal but USC starter Ryan Cook (6.1 IP, 8 H, 5 R, 3 ER, 2 BB, 3 SO) settled down to get Phelps on a sacrifice fly that allowed August to score an unearned run before forcing Ryan Seawell into an inning-ending 5-4-3 double play.

USC came back with a three-spot in the top of the fourth to take a commanding 5-1 advantage. The Trojans got their first run in the inning before the Cardinal could record an out when Torres, Stock and Estrella led the frame off with three consecutive singles. Inman got O'Neill to ground into a 6-4-3 double play but Buss started another rally with a two-out single and scored on an RBI double from Green.

Stanford tried to keep pace with the Trojans by answering with two runs of its own in the bottom of the fourth. A leadoff single by August, a double from Juhl and a passed ball charged to Stock netted the Cardinal its first score of the frame before Milleville followed with an RBI to drive home the other. The Cardinal managed to load the bases with two outs for Brendan Domaracki but the Cardinal designated hitter left the bases loaded when he struck out on a check swing and was subsequently ejected after arguing the call.

The score remained 5-3 in favor of the Trojans until the seventh when USC scored the first of its six unearned runs. Duda singled with one out but the inning looked to be over when Torres hit a tailor-made double play ball to Sorgi that the Cardinal second baseman turned into a throwing error when his short throw to Phelps covering second was high. Stock then singled to load the bases and Estrella brought Duda home with an unearned run.

One of Stanford's three seventh inning runs that tied the game at 6-6 was unearned as Sorgi reached on a throwing error by Cook to get on base for Ratliff's two-run opposite field shot over the left field wall. Cook stayed in the game to retire Grant Escue before giving way to Rabago, who was greeted by Taylor's long game-tying blast over the leftcenter field fence that brought the Stanford crowd to life.

Stanford was able to answer USC's five-run eighth with two of its own in the inning but could get no closer. Pinch-hitter Randy Molina and Sorgi opened the Cardinal eighth with back-to-back singles but Ratliff fouled out trying to bunt his way on base. Escue came through with an RBI double to score Molina and Taylor brought home Sorgi with a sacrifice fly but the Cardinal would not score again.

Stanford and USC continue the three-game series on Saturday and Sunday with start times scheduled both days for 1 pm, PT. Saturday's pitching matchup is scheduled to feature USC RHP Brad Boxberger (1-1, 1.84) against Stanford LHP Jeremy Bleich (1-1, 5.79). The Trojans have named LHP Tommy Milone (2-2, 5.74) as their probable starter for Sunday's series finale, while the Cardinal has yet to announce a starter.

Tickets the upcoming series against USC and all regular season Stanford Baseball home games are also available online at gostanford.com or by calling 1-800-STANFORD. Tickets may also be purchased at the Sunken Diamond Ticket Office window one hour before first pitch on game days. For group ticket information (groups of 10 or more), call 650-725-2876.

NOTES

STANFORD

- Stanford lost for the first time at home in 2007, falling to 9-1 at Sunken Diamond this season with its 9-0 start at home prior to Friday's loss the team's best start at Sunken Diamond since the 1993 club began its home schedule with 10 straight wins
- Stanford fell to 1-6 against ranked opponents this season in contrast to its 9-1 record versus unranked clubs
- Michael Taylor (RF) and Sean Ratliff (CF) have now each started all 17 games this season
- Michael Taylor extended his string of consecutive games started to 133 dating back to the 2005 season
- Michael Taylor extended his season-high hit streak to eight games and one shy of his career-high nine-game hit streak
- Joey August equaled a career-best and posted a season-best in hits with the fourth three-hit game of his career
- Sean Ratliff tied a career-best with the second two-RBI game of his career
- Adam Sorgi recorded his first multiple-hit game of the season with his 2-for-3 effort and tied a team season-high with five assists
- Tom Stilson suffered his first career loss
- Jeffrey Inman allowed a career-high 11 hits and career-high-tying five runs and five earned runs
- Stanford needs to sweep the final two games of the series Saturday and Sunday to avoid losing a series to the Trojans for the fourth straight time as the Cardinal lost its third straight game overall to USC
- USC is the only opponent on Stanford's 2007 schedule that holds an advantage in the all-time series versus Stanford with a career 208-159-3 record against the Cardinal
- Stanford had a season-best two sacrifice flies
- Stanford hit into a season-high three double plays
- Stanford allowed a season-high 21 hits
- Stanford made a season-high four errors and has still yet to record an errorless contest in 17 games this season
- Stanford snapped a dry spell of four straight games without a homer by blasting a pair in the same inning (7th) for the second time this season