



STANFORD ATHLETICS

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BASEBALL RECAP

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*Chris Minaker and John Hester hit key solo homers, while David Stringer tosses 5.0 scoreless innings in relief to earn the victory

Stanford Wins Rubber Game At Fresno State, 6-3

Fresno, Calif. – Chris Minaker and John Hester hit key solo homers in the sixth inning and David Stringer (2-1) tossed 5.0 scoreless innings of relief for the win to lead Stanford (9-4) to a 6-3 victory over Fresno State (7-8) in the rubber game of a non-conference three-game series at Beiden Field on Sunday.

Minaker (2-5, HR, 2 RBI), Jim Rapoport (2-4, 2B, 2 RBI) and Michael Taylor (2-5, 2 2B) had two hits each for the Cardinal with Taylor extending his hit streak to a new career-high seven games and Minaker lengthening his to six. Hester drove in a second run with a sacrifice fly.

Stringer, who was also the winning pitcher as the starter against Nevada last Tuesday, struck out a career-high eight batters in the longest relief outing by a Cardinal pitcher this season. He allowed just four hits and one walk.

"He's got great command of four pitches," said Stanford head coach Mark Marquess. "He's one of our better pitchers right now."

"Ever since I was five years old, I've been coming to Stanford games and looking up to the players," said Stringer, who is a 2004 graduate of Palo Alto High School just across El Camino Real from the Stanford campus. "To be able to put on the Stanford uniform and go out there and contribute is more than a dream come true."

Adam O'Daniel and Kent Sakamoto had solo homers for the Bulldogs with O'Daniel also driving in the other Fresno State run with a second inning bases loaded suicide squeeze. Eight of Fresno State's starters had one hit each but no Bulldogs posted a multiple-hit effort.

Fresno State starter Andy Underwood (2-2) suffered the loss, allowing five runs and eight hits with five strikeouts over the first 7.1 innings.

The Bulldogs took an early 1-0 lead in the bottom of the second when Christian Vitters started a rally with a one-out single, moved to third on a ground rule double from Ozzie Lewis and scored on O'Daniel's suicide squeeze after Stanford starter Matt Leva (4.0 IP, 4 H, 3 R, 3 ER, 3 BB, 5 SO) had walked Frank LoNigro to load the bases. Leva would walk No. 9 hitter Erik Wetzel to reload the bases before getting out of the jam with minimal damage by recording the first of Steve Susdorf's four strikeouts on the day.

"That was a big situation there for Fresno State to only get that one run in the second inning," explained Marquess. "If they could have gotten a big hit there, it would have really hurt us."

Stanford went ahead 2-1 in the top of the third on a clutch two-out, two-RBI double by Rapoport that scored Chris Lewis and Cord Phelps, who had started the rally with back-to-back one-out singles.

Sakamoto tied the contest at 2-2 with his long homer to straight away centerfield with one out in the third and then O'Daniel put the Bulldogs in front 3-2 with a shot off the scoreboard beyond the left field wall with two outs in the fourth.

Minaker tied the game at 3-3 with his solo homer to leftcenter to lead off the sixth and Hester put the Cardinal in front to stay with a two-out solo shot to left field.

Stanford added a single insurance run in both the eighth and ninth innings.

In the eighth, Rapoport led off with a single, moved to third two batters later on a double off the left wall by Taylor and scored on Hester's sacrifice fly.

Ryan Seawell doubled with two outs in the ninth before Rapoport walked and Minaker came through with a clutch two-out RBI single to score Seawell.

Stringer entered the game to start the bottom of the fifth and promptly struck out the side.

The only threat the Bulldogs could muster against him came in the eighth when Beau Mills hit a leadoff double, Vitters drew a subsequent walk and a sacrifice bunt by Ozzie Lewis put the Bulldogs on second and third with just one out. But Stringer steadied and got out of the jam by retiring a pair of pinch-hitters, striking out Ryan Overland and getting Jared Halpert on a grounder to Minaker at shortstop to leave the tying run stranded on second.

Stringer also allowed a leadoff single to Wetzel to start the ninth but then retired the next three hitters to avoid any drama.

Stanford continues its current 10-game road trip with a three-game non-conference series at California (6-5) next Friday-Sunday, March 3-5 (2 pm, 1 pm, 1 pm, PT).

NOTES

- Stanford won for the fifth time in its last six games overall and the seventh time in its last eight meetings versus Fresno State dating back to 2004
- Stanford's victory on Sunday extended the team's regular season series win streak over Fresno State to seven since the last time the Bulldogs won a regular season series between the clubs by taking two-of-three at Stanford in 1999

- David Stringer was 2-0 in his two outings during the week, allowing just one earned run and seven hits in 10.1 innings of work for an 0.87 ERA, while striking out 15 and walking just one
- Michael Taylor extended his hit streak to a new career-high seven games ... Taylor is hitting .444 (12-27) with four doubles and nine RBI during the streak, while leading the team with a .340 batting average and co-leading the club with 13 RBI overall
- Chris Minaker extended his season-high hit streak to six games ... Minaker is hitting .462 during the streak and hit his team-high third homer Sunday, while co-leading the club with 13 RBI and ranking second among regulars with a .321 batting average overall
- John Hester drove in three runs during the Fresno State series after driving in just one in his first 10 games
- Sean Ratliff made his first career start as a position player in left field and hit in the leadoff spot
- Jim Rapoport has a current five-game hit streak, hitting .368 during the run
- Stanford has raised its team batting average from a season-low of .199 after five games to its current season-high of .253 by hitting .285 over the past eight contests
- Stanford's team ERA of 3.38 would be the lowest since the 1973 club checked in with a 2.64 mark were the season to end today
- Stanford played errorless baseball for the first time in its last six games and the fifth time this season
- Sunday's game was played in front of 3043, marking the second game of the series that drew more than 3,000 fans in a series that totaled 9592 spectators that was the best attended series at Fresno State since the last time Stanford played at Beiden Field in 2004

- Better notes (something on starting pitchers, two pages on players, etc.)
- Stringer media guide