



STANFORD ATHLETICS

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*Cardinal scores 13 of season-high 20 runs in top of the fourth inning as Michael Taylor homers twice and drives in six in the frame

Stanford Offense Explodes Again In Fifth Straight Win, 20-13 Over USC

Los Angeles, Calif. – Stanford (27-28, 8-15 Pac-10) scored 13 of its season-high 20 runs in the top of the fourth inning of a 20-13 triumph over USC (27-28, 8-15 Pac-10) to extend its win streak to five and claim victory for the eighth time in its last nine games overall at Dedeaux Field on Saturday. Michael Taylor (3-6, 2 HR, 6 RBI) had the first two-homer game of his career and drove in a career-high six runs. Taylor hit both of his homers and drove in all six of his runs in the Cardinal fourth, taking a two-run shot off the scoreboard over the right field fence in his first at bat of the frame before capping the rally by blasting his first career grand slam high off the foul pole down the left field line in his second at bat of the inning.

"There's always a part of you that says 'what if' we could have been playing like this all year long, but that's just not how the game works," said Taylor. "The way that we're playing now is a testament to not giving up and the work ethic that we've had. This is a product of that."

Brendan Domaracki (3-6, 2B, 3B, 4 RBI) added career-highs with both three hits and four RBI, while Brian Juhl (3-5, HR, 3 RBI) homered and tied a career-high with his three hits. Sean Ratliff (3-5, RBI, SB) had a three-hit game as well and three other Stanford players – Randy Molina (2-3, RBI), Ryan Seawell (2-4, 2B, 2 RBI) and Cord Phelps (2-6, 3B, RBI) – picked up two hits each as eight of nine Cardinal starters had at least one hit and all nine scored at least once.

"It's really encouraging to see us swinging the bats the way we have been," said Domaracki. "It gives the pitchers the confidence they need to go out and throw their best stuff, and it gives us a good outlook for tomorrow, not to mention next year."

Stanford extended its string of double digit hit games to 10 in a row and has double digit hits in 19 of its last 21 contests to raise its team batting average to a season-high .302.

"We have just really been swinging the bats well lately, and today's performance is another example of that," explained Stanford's head coach Mark Marquess. "Our bats have been carrying us."

Hector Estrella (4-4, 2 2B, 3 RBI) had four hits and scored four runs for USC, while Matt Cusick (2-3, 2B, 5 RBI, SB) drove in five. Anthony Vasquez (2-4, 2 RBI) and Mike O'Neill (2-4, 2B) added two hits each, while all nine Trojan starters had at least one hit. J.J. Owen doubled and drove in a pair.

Stanford started the scoring with a pair of runs in the top of the first inning on four consecutive two-out singles from Ratliff, Taylor, Adam Sorgi and Molina. Ratliff and Taylor scored the two runs, while Sorgi and Molina drove in one each.

USC came back with the game's next six runs, scoring twice in the second inning to tie the score at 2-2 and then adding four more in third to take a 6-2 lead.

Nick Buss led off the Trojans' second with a walk, moved to second on a Johnny Bowden groundout and scored on Estrella's double down the right field line. A two-out bloop single by Vasquez down the left field line scored Estrella from third base two batters later to tie the game.

Stanford starter Erik Davis (4.1 IP, 8 H, 10 R, 10 ER, 5 BB, 3 SO) hit Cusick to start the third inning. Grant Green and Robert Stock followed with back-to-back singles to plate Cusick with the first run of the frame and give USC its initial lead of the game at 3-2. Owen then drove a double down the left field line to score both Green and Stock, before a sacrifice fly by Estrella later in the inning brought Owen home to account for the final Trojans run in the rally.

Stanford sent 17 batters to the plate in its 13-run top of the fourth that started when Juhl led off with a single. Seawell followed with another single and after a throwing error by USC second baseman Matt Cusick the Cardinal had the bases loaded with no outs. Domaracki brought the first two runs of the inning home when he followed with a two-run double. Ratliff then grounded into a RBI fielder's choice for the first out of the inning, before Taylor followed with a two-run homer to give the Cardinal a 7-6 lead and chase USC starter and losing pitcher Ryan Cook (3.1 IP, 11 H, 7 R, 6 ER), who fell to 7-4 on the season. Relievers Shawn Olsen (0.1 IP, 1 H, 4 R, 4 ER, 2 BB) and Kevin Zelenay (0.0 IP, 2 H, 4 R, 4 ER, 3 BB) could only get one out between them. Olsen walked Sorgi and then hit Molina before inducing Phelps into a fielder's choice for the second out of the frame with the score still just 7-6 in favor of the Cardinal. However, Stanford would go on to score eight more runs with two outs in the inning. Olsen walked Juhl to load the bases before Seawell drove in a pair of runs with a two-run double to end Olsen's brief outing. Zelenay came on and walked Joey August to reload the bases before giving up a two-RBI infield single to Domaracki, walking Ratliff and serving up Taylor's dramatic grand slam.

"Anytime you can put together the type of output we did in the fourth inning in a game, let alone one inning, it's something special," said Taylor. "There are a lot of guys on the team that are swinging the bats really well. In that inning, nobody wanted to be the last out."

USC came back with five runs of its own in the bottom of the fifth to cut the Cardinal lead to 16-11. Buss got the rally going with a one-out walk after Davis had retired his first leadoff hitter in five innings to start the frame. Bowden followed Buss' walk with a single to put runners on first and third for Estrella, who singled through the left side to plate Buss. Davis then walked O'Neill to load the bases and was removed in favor of Andrew Clauson, who walked the only batter he faced in Anthony Vasquez to force in a run. Winning pitcher David Stringer (3-2) then came into the game with one out and the bases loaded and gave up a three-run double to Cusick that allowed all three runners he inherited to score and closed the gap to 15-11 before settling down to get the final two outs of the inning without any further damage.

"I was pretty upset about that because my job was to try to get us out of that jam," admitted Stringer about Cusick's shot down the right field line that cleared the bases. "But, I just tried to push it out of my mind and not dwell on it too much. Our bullpen is worn a little thin this series and every appearance each of us makes might have to be a little more extended. I was just trying to get as much out of myself as I could today, so we could save some arms for tomorrow."

Stringer scattered two runs and seven hits without walking a batter and striking out three over his 4.2 inning outing. His 15.1 inning stretch without giving up an earned run came to an end when he allowed an earned run in the bottom of the seventh.

USC managed to score another run in the seventh to cut the one-time nine-run Cardinal lead to just 15-12. Estrella started the inning with a leadoff single and went to third when O'Neill followed with a double. Cusick came through with an RBI single two batters later to score Estrella but Green hit into a 5-4-3 double play to end the possibility of a big inning.

Stanford tacked on an insurance run in the eighth and four more in the ninth.

Domaracki tripled with two outs and scored on a wild pitch by Kevin Couture (4.2 IP, 5 H, 5 R, 5 ER, 2 BB, 7 SO) in the eighth.

A pair of one-out walks to Sorgi and Jason Castro started the ninth. Phelps followed with an RBI single before Juhl hit the scoreboard over the right field wall to cap Stanford's record day of scoring.

USC added a run in the bottom of the ninth when Estrella led off with his second double and fourth hit of the game, moved to third on O'Neill's single and scored on Cusick's sacrifice fly.

Stanford can still finish the 2007 campaign with an even .500 record and run its string of consecutive non-losing campaigns to 14 if the Cardinal can defeat USC in the series and season finale for both teams on Sunday (1 pm, PT). Stanford can also get out of the Pac-10 cellar and move ahead of USC in the league standings with a win on Sunday. Stanford has not announced a probable starting pitcher for Sunday's contest yet, while the Trojans are slated to go with LHP Tommy Malone (3-6, 5.85).

NOTES

STANFORD

- Stanford extended its second longest win streak of the season to five games and has now also won eight of its last nine
- Stanford has now won three straight series for the first time this season and for the first time since the Cardinal won three series in a row versus Arizona State and California, and at Washington from March 28 – May 14, 2006
- Stanford kept its hopes alive of recording its 14th consecutive season of playing at least .500 baseball as the Cardinal can still finish with an even (28-28) record with a victory in its season finale at USC on Sunday
- A win over USC on Sunday will also move Stanford out of the Pac-10 cellar
- Stanford extended its season-long road win streak to four in a row
- The game clocked in at 4:00 to mark the fifth time this season Stanford has played for 4:00 or longer, as well as the 18th occasion in which the Cardinal has played a contest that has lasted 3:40 or more, and the 35th time Stanford has played for 3:00 or more
- Stanford won its third straight game against USC after losing its previous four to the Trojans
- Stanford's victories in the first two games of its current series with USC has assured the Cardinal of a series win to end a four-series slide to the Trojans
- Stanford scored a season-high 20 runs and recorded the team's first 20-plus run game since a 22-10 victory also at USC on May 3, 2003
- Stanford had a season-high 19 RBI
- Stanford had a season-high 34 total bases
- Stanford's three home runs tied a season-high
- Stanford recorded double digit hits for the 10th straight game and the 19th time in the last 21 contests to improve its batting average to a new season-high .302
- Stanford's 19 hits were its second-highest total of the season and just one less than the season-high 20 the Cardinal recorded in its previous game at USC on May 25
- Stanford's 13-run fourth inning was its highest scoring inning of the season
- Michael Taylor hit two homers in a game for the first time in his career, hit his first career grand slam, had a career-high six RBI, tied a career-high three runs scored and tied a season-high with six at bats
- Michael Taylor's two home runs allowed him to tie Sean Ratliff for the team lead with 12 on the season
- Michael Taylor extended his hit streak to a new career-high 11 games with his 15th multiple-hit contest in his last 18 games
- Brendan Domaracki had career-highs of three hits, four RBI and six at bats, while tying a career-best with two runs scored
- Brian Juhl scored a career-high three runs and tied a career-best with three RBI
- Cord Phelps tied a career-high by getting six at bats for the second consecutive game
- Cord Phelps extended his hit streak to a season-high-tying five games
- Michael Taylor tied a season-high with six at bats
- Adam Sorgi tied a season-high with six at bats
- Stanford came from behind to win for the 18th time in 27 victories this season
- Stanford now has 42 homers on the season and has extended its string of 40-homer campaigns to 20 in a row