

Miners Blow Largest Lead Since 2021, Fall Further Back In Atlantic East

In an offensive slugfest, the Sussex County Miners fell to the Down East Bird Dawgs, 11-10, in Game 1 of the series in Grainger Stadium.

The mound featured Billy Parsons (1-2, 7.06 ERA), making his sixth start for the Miners, and Drew Henderson (1-2, 9.91 ERA) got the start for the Bird Dawgs.

The game opened up with the Miners striking first in the top of the first inning. Leadoff hitter Mahki Backstrom opened the game with a single, followed by a walk from third baseman Sean Roby Jr and first baseman Kiko Romero.

Although designated hitter Keenan Taylor struck out, shortstop Evan Berkey hit a single down the right field line to bring Backstrom and Roby Jr. home to take an early 2-0 lead.

The Miners were able to extend their lead in the top of the third inning. Taylor led the inning with a leadoff double down the right center field line. After Berkey got struck out, right fielder Edwin Mateo hit a single to bring home Taylor, extending the lead 3-0.

The Miners continued to run up the score in the top of the fourth inning. Center fielder Will Zimmerman started out the order by delivering a single, and then stole second. Second baseman Hunter D'Amato followed with a walk, but Backstrom went down swinging.

Sean Roby Jr. reached base on a fielder's choice, but Zimmerman was thrown out at third. With two runners still on, Gartland lined an RBI single to bring D'Amato home, with Taylor up to bat.

Taylor delivered a double to left field, bringing home both Romero and Roby Jr. to keep a comfortable 6-0 lead.

The Bird Dawgs were able to give themselves a fighting chance later in the inning. First baseman Christian Adams started the rally with a single to right field, before third baseman Yaniel Laboy launched a two-run home run to right, his fourth homer of the season.

The Bird Dawgs' offense continued to strike runs on the board as second baseman Trotter Harlan doubled to center field and later came around to score from catcher Tyler Blaum's RBI single. The Bird Dawgs cut the lead to 6-3.

The Miners broke the game open in the top of the sixth inning. The Bird Dawgs called on reliever Davis Blair (1-2, 13.5 ERA). Henderson finished the day with four innings pitched, eight hits, six walks and five strikeouts. Blair faced Romero first, where Romero worked a leadoff walk before Taylor was hit by a pitch. Berkey laid down a bunt to advance the runners, with Mateo on deck.

The Bird Dawgs continued to claw their way into the deficit. After right fielder Colby Backus hit a single to get on first base, Laboy singled to right field, moving Backus to third base. Harlan continued his strong day at the plate with an RBI double to left field that brought Backus home. Laboy advanced to third and later scored when Blaum reached on a fielder's choice to trim the lead 10-5.

The Bird Dawgs take the lead for the first time in the bottom of the seventh. The Miners call on reliever pitcher Dalton Fowler (0-0, 9.00 ERA). Parsons ended the day with ten hits, five earned runs, three strikeouts, and didn't surrender a walk. Fowler faced center fielder Stephen DiTomaso to begin the inning, where he allowed a double to DiTomaso on a ground ball to right field. DiTomaso eventually scored on an RBI-single from designated hitter Lyle Miller-Green. After Backus drew in a walk, the bases were loaded when Laboy was hit by a pitch.

With the inning winding down, the Miners turned to reliever Jorge Garcia(0-0, 6.75 ERA). Harlan reached on a fielder's choice, allowing Miller-Green to score while Laboy was out trying to advance. Garcia then walked Blaum to reload the bases before shortstop Trey Law lined a two-run single to right field, scoring Harlan and Buckus, while leaving Law on third. DiTomaso drove in a single to bring Law home to give the Bird Dawgs the 11-10 lead in the bottom of the seventh. It was the largest blown lead for the Miners since blowing an eight run lead on August, 27th 2021 at Tri-City.

The Bird Dawgs turned to reliever Jack Hagan (0-1, 5.40 ERA) to save the day for the Dawgs in the top of the ninth inning. Zimmerman hit a fly ball to DiTomaso to secure the first out, and batters D'Amato and Backstrom ground out for the end of the game.

The Miners lose their second game in a row, and fall to 10-16 on the season, with their road record falling to 3-14. The Down East Bird Dawgs with their third in a row, and move to 14-14 on the season, with their home record improving to 9-4 on the year.

The Miners continue their road trip against The Down East Bird Dawgs Wednesday night, with first pitch scheduled for 7:00 p.m.

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