



SMC Uses Pitching Committee To Beat S.F. State

By Kevin D. Shallat

The Saint Mary's baseball team sandwiched a game with San Francisco State in between league games on Tuesday, April 1. The fans may have been a little confused on April Fools Day, as Saint Mary's used seven pitchers (none for more than two innings).

Head coach Jed Soto wanted to give his pitchers some work in preparation for the big Pepperdine series, which loomed for the Gaels the following weekend. The Gators of San Francisco State were able to chip away five runs on the day, but the Gaels held on to win this game, 7-5.

The game may have been a tune-up for the Gaels, but the all-time series record between the two teams was also on the line. The last time the Gaels played the Gators was in 1989 when the Gaels won 2-1. The all-time series record, prior to this game was 16-16.

Alex Schmarzo (1-0) was the starting pitcher for the Gaels, or more succinctly, was the first of seven pitchers to take part in the tag-team, pitch by committee method.

Regardless of how one describes the process, the product was undeniable. Schmarzo allowed only one hit, no walks, and struck out four batters.

Just as Schmarzo's pitching effort helped the Gaels defensively, the Gaels received a similar shot to the arm offensively from their leadoff hitter, Cory Miller. He set the tone early for the Gaels by getting a key leadoff hit in the bottom of the first inning. Miller went three for five at the plate, with two runs and an RBI to finish the day. The Gaels continue to reward themselves with patient, unselfish play from their players. In the same inning Ryan Mulligan walked, and Cory Miller bunted to set up a big inning for the Gaels. Both players are more than capable hitters, but were rewarded by playing small ball. Miller, Mulligan, and Wells would all score, which gave the Gaels a quick 3-0 lead after the first inning of play.

Kenny Fuglerud hit his third home run of the season to put the Gaels up 4-0 in the bottom of the second. Shortly thereafter Anthony Aliotti was able to plate Miller to give the Gaels a comfortable 5-0 lead. The Gators would climb right back to make it a 5-2 game.

After Joel Staples scored the Gaels sixth run of the day, Randy Wells put the game out of reach in the bottom of the fourth, as he smashed a solo shot to right field to make it a 7-2 game.

"I was in a good count. I was sitting fastball. I know he didn't have much off-speed, so I was just sitting on it," said Wells.

After the Gators cut it to 7-3 in the eighth, Matt McCormick came in to close the game in the ninth. He allowed two runs, but was able to finish up the game for the Gaels, 7-5.

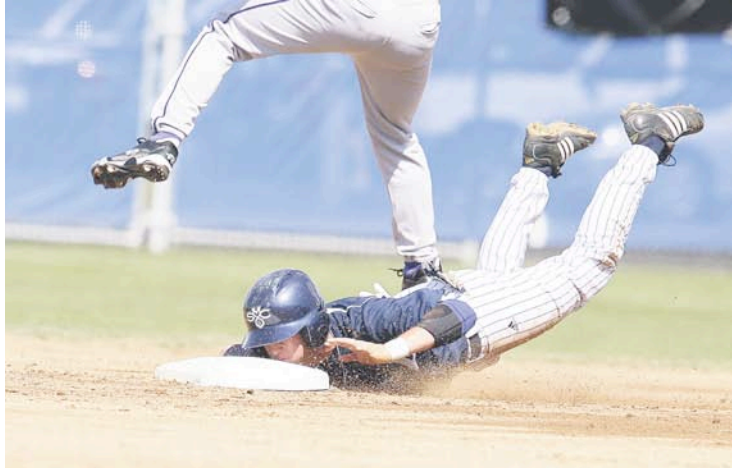


Photo Tod Fierner



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