Basketball, 2B, 3B. Tennis, 8B. Baseball, 9B.

Diamond Braves sweep Bloomfield

By Nick Phillips

Sports Editor

The UNCP baseball team, ranked 18th in the country, outscored visiting Bloomfield by a combined 31-6 margin over the team’s three-game series on Feb. 19 and 20, as the Braves improved their perfect record to 11-0 after the series sweep.

In the series opener, UNCP recorded 14 hits and picked up a solid pitching performance from starting pitcher Tyler Wood to take the first game 8-1.

Wood threw three shutout innings, as the senior struck out six batters, walked one and allowed only seven hits to pick up the win.

 Fellow senior Weston Sherrill finished out the final inning, striking out two batters but allowing Bloomfield’s lone run of the contest to score via a wild pitch in the final inning.

Braves junior Brad Bridgeham had a 3-for-4 game at the plate, including a two-run single in the fourth and a RBI double in the seventh inning.

UNCP also received multi-hit games from three other players in the opener. Senior Kenny Mickens homered to highlight his 2-for-4 day, junior Eitan Maoz picked up an RBI as part of his 2-for-5 performance and senior Joe Mangum finished 2-for-5 with an RBI-double in the eighth inning.

Mickens’ leadoff homer in the third inning started the scoring for the Braves, who pushed the lead to 6-0 after six innings.

Bridgeham delivered his two-RBI double in the fourth inning, while Maoz picked up an RBI-single in the fifth, before Mickens scored on junior Josh Haley’s RBI grounder.

Bridgeham collected another RBI with a double in the seventh inning that was matched by Mangum’s double in the eighth.

Shutout win

In the second game, UNCP tallied two hits apiece from three players to give starter Brad Isom more than enough run support in the Braves’ 6-0 win.

Maoz knocked two doubles, Williams had an RBI and two hits and junior Aaron Parnell singled, doubled and scored to lead the Braves hitting performances.

Isom, a senior, struck out a career-high nine Bloomfield batters while giving up just four hits and one walk in 6-1/3 innings of work.

Senior pitcher Josh Bagley, pitching on short rest, tallied his second win of the season for the Black and Gold.

Making his second start in four days, Bagley went four innings, giving up eight hits and five runs but striking out six Bloomfield batters.

Up 4-0 going into the second inning, the Braves did most of their damage in the following innings, with the lead up to 12-5 after four innings.

Mangum also blasted a homer, his second of the year, to drive in both runs in the sixth inning. McKinney scored four times through out the contest as well.

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Pre-season all-American closer Brian Willis recorded six of his eight outs via strikeout as he picked up a save after working the final 2-2/3 innings.

The Braves had nine different players capture base hits in the win, with Maoz finishing off a great series with a 2-for-3 performance that included a triple, a pair of singles and three RBIs.

Williams finished game three with three more runs in the seventh inning. Williams added another two-hit performance, including knocking a double and having two RBIs, while senior Keith Whitman picked up an RBI as part of his 2-for-4 afternoon.

Haley connected for his third home run of the season as part of a three-run fourth inning for the Braves, while Mangum also blasted a homer, his second of the year, to drive in both runs in the sixth inning.

GAME THREE ROUT

UNCP broke out the brooms in the series finale, tallying 14 hits while scoring three or more runs in four different innings to blow out Bloomfield 17-5.

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Mangum’s homer added two more runs in the sixth before UNCP plated three final runs in the seventh inning to complete the scoring.

UNCP begins Peach Belt Conference play on Feb. 26 and 27 when No. 8 North Georgia comes to town for a three-game series.