

Rockville Blows Past Braves

by Matt Tymann

July 8, 2008 HERNDON—Shortstop Adam Bryant scored three runs and drove in two more, and the visiting Rockville Express scored the most runs of any Herndon Braves' opponent this season, winning at Braves' Field on Tuesday night, 12-7.

Bryant was one of six Rockville players to drive in at least one run and score at least one more, in an offensive onslaught which doubled the team's highest single-game run output of the year. On the season, the Express (9-14) has averaged fewer than three runs per game.

Herndon (9-16) actually had an early 5-0 lead after a five-run second inning, which featured a two-run homer by second baseman Mycal Jones. Shane Davis also had an RBI in the inning, and the other two runs scored on Rockville errors.

Errors would turn out to be a big part of the story on Tuesday, to the benefit of both teams. Five of the Braves seven runs were unearned, but Herndon committed a total of six errors of their own, leading to three unearned Rockville runs, and a host of free bases. The first four Rockville runs came in the top of the third, an inning in which the Express had just two hits. Bryant and Justin DeMarco both reached on walks, and Kevin McAvoy reached second base on a two-error play by Braves' second baseman Mycal Jones. Gary Helmick had the lone RBI hit of the inning, knocking in Bryant and JT Bloodworth on an one-out single.

The Braves would battle back in the bottom of the inning, getting an RBI single from Davis and scoring a second run on a Bloodworth error. That made the score 7-4 after just three innings, and preceded Rockville's eight unanswered runs.

An Express run in the fourth, and another in the fifth, cut the Braves' lead to 7-6 heading into the sixth. The sixth inning was when errors most hurt Herndon's cause, as both Bryant and Kyle Lahonta scored unearned runs to give Rockville their first lead of the game at 8-7.

From that point on, the Braves' bats went silent. They managed just one more hit for the rest of the game, a sixth-inning single by Eric Woodrow. Alex Ferrera and Matt Simone each worked leadoff walks in the seventh and eighth innings, respectively, but neither would advance past first base.

Rockville would tack on another run in the seventh on a Josh Cardoso groundout, and then poured on three more in the ninth. After Lahonta singled in Todd Eskelin, Bryant hit a two-run shot to provide the final insurance runs.

Each of the five Braves' pitchers surrendered at least one run, but the three given up by relievers Sean Holliday and Paul Rodriguez were all unearned. Still, Rodriguez was charged with the loss, dropping his record on the season to 4-1. For Rockville, reliever

Jordan Mathers gave up just one earned run pitching the third through the sixth innings, and was credited with the win. He is now 2-0 on the year.

The Braves' next game is this Thursday night at 7 PM, when they will host the league-leading Bethesda Big Train. The Big Train is 21-5 on the year, 11.5 games ahead of Herndon. Bethesda has won both of the two meetings between the teams this year, but only by a single run each time. The Braves led the first contest 4-1 in the sixth inning before falling 5-4, and held a 5-4 lead heading into the ninth inning of the second game, only to see the Big Train score two to win 6-5. The Braves' probable starter for Thursday's game is Keith Hessler, who is 0-2 with a 6.14 ERA so far this season.