

UNION FORCES "IF NECESSARY" GAME

PADUCAH, Ky. -- Cumberland dropped the opener but Max Kautz hit a grand slam, Keith Kirby tossed five shutout innings and Kris Miller added a two-run homer for insurance in the 2nd-ranked Bulldogs 9-5 triumph over Union Univ. Thursday to win the title in the 2010 McDonald's TranSouth Championships at Brooks Stadium.

Cumberland (50-9) lost the first game, 6-1, ending a 20-game winning streak for the Bulldogs, but the club bounced back with three early runs in the second game and Kautz belted a grand slam in the fifth inning to give CU a 7-0 lead.

Union (41-15) came back with five runs on six hits in the sixth inning, but Miller belted his fifth home run of the tournament, a two-run shot in the ninth, to give the Bulldogs some breathing room and the team's sixth conference tournament championship in eight seasons in the TranSouth.

Kirby (1-0) tossed five shutout innings in just his third start of the year before running into trouble in the sixth. He allowed five runs on 10 hits in 6.2 innings to pick up his first career victory.

Daniel Kern got out of a jam in the seventh as much with his glove as with his arm. With two runners on and two outs, Beau Baker lined a chopper up the middle that was headed for centerfield, but Kern got just enough of it with his glove that shortstop Sam Kika ran it down behind the bag and flipped to second base to end the threat.

Kern walked one in the eighth and allowed a leadoff single in the ninth, but earned his sixth save with two strikeouts in 2.1 innings.

Union starter Brad Davis (2-3) gave up nine runs on 16 hits but worked the whole game for a very depleted staff. He walked one and struck out five in 8.2 innings.

Kautz collected three hits in the contest to lead the Bulldogs 16-hit attack, while Miller, Matt Greener, Troy Frazier, David Fanshawe and T.J. Murphy all posted a pair of hits.

In the opener Union's Kevin Kirksey (2-2) was nothing short of magnificent, allowing just a solo home run and six hits altogether in a complete game. The righthander struck out six and walked two and used his hard slider to perfection.

He had thrown just 15.1 innings all season heading into the game before tossing nine in the victory. Kirksey retired 15 of the final 17 batters of the game and the Bulldogs had more than one baserunner in just one inning.

Robert Post (6-3) took the loss, allowing five runs on seven hits in eight-plus innings. The righthander walked five, struck out four and hit two batters but worked out of several jams and kept the club in the game.

In the opener Union took an early lead with a solo homer to left from Grant Luke in the second inning, his fifth of the season. Baker put Union ahead 2-0 with another solo shot, this time to centerfield, for his sixth home run of the year.

Miller's solo homer to left to leadoff the fourth cut the deficit in half for the Bulldogs, but Union answered with another single run in the fifth.

Clint Barnes singled to leftcenter with one out and Corey Rudolph fisted a double just over the third base bag and down the leftfield line. Alex Turner's line drive to left plated Barnes for a 3-1 Union advantage.

A leadoff walk to Danny Grimm in the seventh provided an opportunity for another run for Union. Barnes sacrificed him to second and Rudolph fisted a single into short leftcenter for an RBI.

Union scored two insurance runs in the ninth after a leadoff walk to Barnes chased Post from the game. Rudolph followed with a double over the third base bag again. Reliever Matt Vance got two outs but David Maristany doubled off the base of the wall in center, plating two runs for a 6-1 Union lead.

Rudolph finished the game 4-for-4 for Union while Maristany had two hits and two RBIs.

Cumberland got on the board first in the second game, as Frazier singled to leadoff and Fanshawe followed with a double down the leftfield line. Sacrifice flies from Kautz and Murphy gave the Bulldogs a 2-0 lead.

CU added a run in the third after a one-out double to rightcenter by Kikla. Miller laced a single off the wall in leftfield, plating the run for a 3-0 Bulldog advantage.

Cumberland loaded the bases with nobody out in the fourth thanks to a single from Kautz, a bunt single by Murphy and then a sacrifice bunt that turned into a single for Dave Weyer. But Greg Appleton lined into a doubleplay and Kikla lined out to deep right, keeping the score 3-0.

The Bulldogs finally opened up the game in the fifth thanks to Kautz. Greener singled to leadoff and Frazier was hit with one out. Fanshawe dumped a single into leftcenter before Kautz hammered a 2-2 fastball well over the wall in left, his 12th of the year, for a 7-0 CU advantage.

Union got back in the game quickly after being shut out for five innings by Kirby.

Grimm and Barnes both singled to the rightside to leadoff and Josh Jones singled to left with one out, loading the bases. Baker's groundout scored one run before three straight hits from Union.

CU wins TSAC tourney

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Turner plated two runs with a single to center and Maristany's double off the wall in leftcenter pushed across Turner. Luke then fisted an 0-2 pitch just over the head of Appleton at first base and into short right, cutting the Bulldog lead to 7-5.

Miller provided some much-needed insurance for the Bulldogs in the ninth inning. Greener led off with a double before Miller hit his 23rd homer of the season into leftcenter for a 9-5 lead.

Cumberland will find out the nine regional sites later tonight and then where it will play in a five-team regional next week by 5 p.m. CT on Friday. Stay tuned to www.cumberland.edu/athletics for updates on the regional sites.