

LEWISTON, Idaho – Cumberland rode the strong right arm of Aaron Wilkerson Saturday afternoon in a 9-1 win over No. 7 Embry-Riddle in the 54th annual Avista-NAIA World Series at Lewis-Clark State College's Harris Field.

The junior right-hander was nearly unhittable, allowing just four hits though eight innings and striking out 13. He dominated from the beginning, hurling a perfect game through three innings, including seven strikeouts during that span.

The Bulldogs (54-9) move on to face No. 6 Oklahoma City on Monday at 5 p.m. CT. while Embrya-Riddle falls into the losers' bracket.

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In six of his eight innings, Wilkerson sent the batters down in order. Other than a solo home run by Steve Sabins in the top of the fifth, Wilkerson did not allow an Eagle base runner past second. The home

run he allowed broke up a string of 27 2/3 straight scoreless innings dating back four games to April 30 against Lyon (Ark.).

He has now recorded three straight double-digit strikeout efforts.

“We were very anxious to play today,” longtime Cumberland coach Woody Hunt said. “With all the travel, rain mixed in ... you tend to get a little stale, but we were ready to play.”

Hunt, who led the Bulldogs to Series title in 2004, felt Wilkerson’s hot start was key.

“It gave Aaron a lot of confidence on the mound,” Hunt said. But it got (ERAU) thinking a little bit, too. They have a good team, so they fought back, but Wilkerson did a great job. He’s just a great pitcher for us.”

Cumberland took an early 1-0 lead in the second inning after Dave Weyer hit a sacrifice fly. His play scored Jason Frost, a pinchrunner for David Fanshawe. Two innings later, the Bulldogs cashed in on two unearned runs. Weyer rolled a grounder to the second baseman, which was mishandled and resulted in one run. Greg Appleton followed with an RBI-single to left and the lead increased to 3-0.

Sabins cut the deficit to 3-1 with his home run in the fifth inning for Embry-Riddle. That was all the noise the Eagles were able to muster. Cumberland tacked on two more in the bottom of the fifth to make the score 5-1.

Third baseman Matt Greener, who went 2-for-4 for Cumberland, pounded his national-tying 26th home run in the eighth inning. His three-run blast tied Richard Bohlken of Lubbock Christian for the top spot on the NAIA list. Sam Kikla added an RBI-single to cap the scoring in the same inning.

Reliever Daniel Kern came on in the top of the ninth in relief of Wilkerson and allowed one hit.

GAME NOTES: The 13 strikeouts for Wilkerson is the highest amount thus far in the 2010 World Series (through seven games)... Cumberland improves to 21-18 overall in the World Series including 8-3 in First Round games... Matt Greener's three RBIs pushed his season total to 91, which set a school record – he is ranked second in the NAIA this season, three behind leader Cody Gaskill of Tennessee Wesleyan... The nine runs allowed by Embry-Riddle is the most this season since losing 9-8 against Edward Waters (Fla.) on April 2 -- a span of 27 games... The next opponent for Cumberland is Oklahoma City, a team that the Bulldogs have won three-of-four against this season. In the World Series, Cumberland is 2-3 against the Stars with the last meeting in 2005 (L, 6-2).

Embry-Riddle 000 010 000 - 1 5 1

Cumberland 010 220 04x - 9 11 0

ERAU - Zinkovich, Bevis (8), Ortman (8) and Goolsby. CU - Wilkerson, Kern (9) and Fanshawe. **WP**-Wilkerson (13-1). **LP** - Zinkovich (10-3). S -none **Embry-Riddl**

e hits

Robbins 2, Yost, Sabins (HR), Glaum.

Cumberland hits

- Appleton, Kikla, Greener 2 (HR-26th), Miller, Frazier, Fanshawe 2 (2B, HR-12th), Kautz 2, Murphy