

Ithaca College vs Chapman University – March 8, 2020

Callaghan Crushing

Through seven games this season, junior Garret Callaghan is 13-29 (.448), with six RBI, one homerun, five extra-base hits, and has reached base at a .529 clip. For Callaghan, this is his best start to a season of his Ithaca College career. In his freshman and sophomore seasons, he averaged just five hits, four RBI and one extra base hit through his first seven games.

Two-Way Star

Senior Buzz Shirley is off to a hot start this season. He is hitting .433 and has accumulated six RBI as well as four extra-base hits. On the rubber he has posted a 1.42 ERA as he has allowed just two earned runs through 12.2 innings pitched and has struck out 15 hitters. All four numbers qualify for the top ten in their respective Liberty League categories. While the offensive prowess has always been a constant for Shirley in his Bombers career, it seems that Shirley will have an increased presence on the bump as he only threw five innings last season.

Speed Kills

Through seven games this season, the Bombers have stolen 18 bases in 22 attempts (.818). Matt Smith and Garret Callaghan are pacing the way with five SB each. The two are looking to add on to their single-season highs as they combined for just 11 bags throughout the entirety of the 2019 campaign. The Bombers are on pace to surpass their team stolen base total from last season where they swiped 29 bags through 40 games.

Eliminating the Running Game

Ithaca catcher Gil Merod has shined behind the plate this season as he has caught five of nine potential base stealers (.555) this season. Also, he has only allowed one past ball. Merod leads qualified Liberty League catchers in both categories. He will face a challenge in tonight's matchup as the Panthers are 15-19 (.789) in stolen base attempts this year.

In the Past

Ithaca College has matched up against Chapman University on 19 occasions dating back to 2002. The Bombers have lost their last five meetings against them being outscored 62-7. Their longest losing streak against them stretched from 2005-2011 when the Bombers lost nine straight. They look to come out victorious against the Panthers for the first time since their 9-7 victory in 2013.

Taking the Free Base

In the Bombers' 18-16 loss to St. Mary's College on March 1st, Ithaca hitters were hit by four pitches. This ties Ithaca with Clarkson for the most HBPs in a single game this year out of all Liberty League teams. This has been a theme for Bombers hitters this year as they have been hit by 11 pitches this season and have three players on the Liberty League leaderboards: Wollner - 4 (2nd), M. Smith - 3 (5th), and Shirley - 2 (8th).

Defensive Struggles

The Bombers have struggled mightily on the defensive side of things this season. Through seven games, they have committed 23 errors as a team and are averaging about three per game. Shortstop Jack Lynch has been charged with 10 of them which leads all qualified Liberty League defenders. Lynch committed just 12 errors in 40 total games through the entirety of the 2019 season.

Hot Start

The Panthers opened the season winning 10 straight games where they outscored opponents 97-43. This marks the best start for the program over its last 11 seasons. The Panthers .318/.404/.516 team slash line and 134 runs scored highlight a few of the many offensive categories in which Chapman has outpaced Ithaca.

Offensive Firepower

Chapman has a flair for the longball as it has left the yard on 19 occasions this season. Junior Henry Zeisler's five round trippers leads the way placing him one homerun away from matching his single-season high of six. Upperclassmen have made the largest impact offensively this season as they are responsible for about 80 percent of the club's homerun total.

Home Sweet Home

Tonight's matchup will be hosted by Chapman at Hart Park where it has dominated this season. The Panthers are 4-1 and have a team OPS of .848 at home. Not only that, but pitchers have only allowed 12 earned runs through 45 innings pitched (2.40 ERA) and have posted a 9.4 K/9. This season the program has averaged 160 fans per home game.

A New Three-Headed Monster

Last season, Chapman seniors Tyler Peck, Jonathan Hernandez and Mason Collins were responsible for about 65 percent of the pitching staff's innings pitched and strikeouts. As those seniors graduated, Junior hurlers Nick Garcia, Riley Glenn and Cody Turner have led the way this year on the mound. The three have combined for 95 punchouts this season in 77.2 innings pitched and are averaging 10.5 strikeouts per nine innings.

Fresh Look in the Back of the Pen

After last season's closer Nick Garcia was promoted to a starting rotation role this year, freshman Wyatt Thompson has gotten most opportunities to pitch in the ninth inning. He has recorded a team leading three saves and has struck out 13 hitters in 10 innings pitched. His 1.80 ERA and 0.70 WHIP suggests he will be a staple in high-leverage situations for head coach Scott Lavery's squad this season.

The Run Barrage

In a total of 56 games in 2019, Chapman was able to bring across 10 or more runs on nine separate occasions. Through just 15 games this season, the Panthers have hit double digits in the run column five times in which four have resulted in totals of 15 or more. Runs have been aplenty as the team has driven in 134 runs and is averaging 8.9 per game. The all-time program record was set in 1999 when they accumulated 433 runs and averaged 9.84 per game in 44 contests.

Mack Continues to Smack

Junior infielder Mack Cheli is off to his best start ever in a Panthers uniform. Through 15 games he is slashing .275/.433/.510 supported by three homeruns, 13 RBI and six extra-base hits. His longball total already matches the mark he set last season in 48 games. He will look to set his career high and add on to it in the remainder of the season. His three round trippers are currently good for the second most on the team.

Instant Threat at the Top of the Order

Sophomore Brad Shimabuku was seeing it well last weekend when Chapman picked up victories against Caltech and the University of Dallas. He went 6-7 (.857) with 1 homerun, four runs scored, three extra-base hits and six RBI. Shimabuka is no stranger to stat lines in this neighborhood. Through 15 games, he has picked up at least one hit in 12 of the 15 and multiple base knocks in nine of the 15. He leads the ballclub with 26 hits, seven doubles, 20 RBI and is tied for the team lead in runs scored with 17.