

Penn State and Purdue Trade Slip-Ups, Nittany Lions Slide Into a Series Win

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UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa – A series full of fielding blunders, blown calls, Rob Cooper getting tossed, extra-base hits, blinding sun, unforgiving downpour of rain and punch-for-punch action made one to remember for the Nittany Lions.

Penn State snuck away with a win in the series finale against Purdue 7-5, the first series win against the Boilermakers since 2016 and first against a Big Ten opponent in almost one year.



The awkward shadows along with the bright sun created by Medlar Field caused problems Friday for both ball clubs, but Saturday brought rain and wet conditions as the clouds covered the sky. Even with the change of weather, the hiccups continued.

The first ball hit in play glanced off the glove of Penn State shortstop Jay Harry, this error was followed by a passed ball by Matt Wood and a hit by pitch by Travis Luensmann which contributed to a 2-0 deficit after the top of the first inning.

“We aren’t worried about the snowball effect,” Harry said. “We want the next ball hit to us, I had a couple hit to me throughout the game following that and I wasn’t worried because I have my guys around me.”

Harry responded with a clean game at shortstop along with a triple and towering home run over the right-center field fence to put the nail in coffin of the Boilermakers.

If the errors weren’t a problem to begin with, the rain made it hard for pitchers to stay on the mound. Purdue pitcher Logan Danzeisen replaced the starting pitcher of the game only to slip and fall twice off the mound, balking twice and scoring Tayven Kelley on his first two pitches.

Luensmann on the other hand, was able to shine on the cloudy day in his six innings of work to pick up his teammates and the thin pitching staff.

Head coach Rob Cooper touched on the fact that the previous game in which they fell 5-11 to Purdue, that they were focused on responding better to the adversity.

“The guys were upset at themselves and not the scenarios that they were put in,” Cooper said. “They said we are better than what we did yesterday... Their pride was at stake, and they were going to make sure that didn’t happen that way again.”

Penn State is 5-7 in Big Ten conference play and is one of the teams on the bubble of making the Big Ten playoff. Cooper says that the team can carry what they learned about themselves in this series and use it to propel them down the stretch.

“We’ve been in many ball games this season where we were an out or a swing away from a different outcome... If our guys continue to nail down their approaches and continue to buy in to our team philosophy like they did today, it can help our play down the stretch,” Cooper said.

The series win for the Nittany Lions sends them into Easter Sunday at 14-19.

They will return to action Wednesday, April 20 against Mount St. Mary’s at Medlar Field at Lubrano Park. First pitch is set for 6 p.m.

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