

Sports

Christians' baseball has 'the right chemistry'



Photo by Mike G. Simonelli

Slide: Jimmy Duncan steals second base against North Carolina A&T Tuesday. The Christians swept the doubleheader 3-2, 6-3.

By Loukia Louka
Editor

On a hot and cloudless Wednesday, April 3, the sun is beating down relentlessly, its heat interrupted occasionally by a cool breeze.

It is a powder blue day, one of the first scorchers of 1985. Classes are over for the day, and out by Harper Center, the lakeside is crowded with sun-worshippers. Their conversations are filled with tales of Fort Lauderdale—the beach, drinking oceans of beer and enjoying being golden brown.

Just beyond Harper Center lies Newsome Field, a windblown diamond filled with figures dressed in red and white, working on sprinting, stretching, catching and pitching. Incoherent murmurs fill the air, the thud of ball against mitt and puffs of dust that settle lazily.

Beyond Newsome Field is the Koury Fieldhouse, a haven for Elon's athletes. Somewhere in the background Huey Lewis is singing "The Heart of Rock and

Roll," while athletes float in and out of the clubhouse. Among the baseball players is senior Barry Culberson of Siler City, a sometime member of the pitching staff and regular at third base.

Culberson has been today's hero. His home run in the bottom of the ninth against Guilford yesterday helped Elon to an 8-5 Carolinas Conference victory.

Different Heroes

Culberson says, "Someone is a hero every game," and he's right. The entire baseball team has indeed filled that role. In fashioning a 25-4 record through April 15 Elon was 11-2 in league play, 17-2 in District 26 games and is ranked high in the national NAIA Poll.

Outfielder Randy Enoch, a senior from Mebane, describes the Elon baseball team as having "the right chemistry." He should know. A veteran Fighting Christian, Enoch led the 1984 baseball team with seven doubles and is this season's leading hitter at .370.

"The players know their

roles," says Enoch. "They know what is expected of them and they play together as a team."

Pete Gibson, a transfer from the University of South Carolina at Aiken, has found his niche in the Elon outfield. Gibson, a senior from Emporia, Va., says he believes that the senior leadership and the power pitching of veterans Greg Harris, John Driscoll and Greg McDannold have vaulted the team to its current status.

Those three pitchers, along with the man considered the pitcher of the future, freshman Benny Tart, have been the cornerstone of Elon's success. "We expected to do well, but not this early," says Gibson. "We're winning but we're not hitting; our pitching is getting us through. No one is really scoring a lot of runs on us." "Coach (Rick) Jones brought in some good quality players," says Culberson. "Pete Gibson, Budgie Clark and Troy Harris have all helped us out."

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Elon's 12-game streak ends

Elon swept a doubleheader against North Carolina A&T University here Tuesday, rebounding from a 9-8 loss to High Point Monday that snapped the Christians' 12-game winning streak.

The Elon wins over A&T boosted the team's overall record to 7-4. The Christians are 11-2 in the Carolinas Conference and 12-2 in District 26.

Elon has seven regular-season games remaining. The Christians played Friday at Pembroke State, at Wingate Saturday and at Wingate today.

The 1981 Elon team finished with an all-time record 41 wins. Elon won the first game of the doubleheader Tuesday by a 3-2 margin.

In the bottom of the seventh inning Budgie Clark reached first on a sacrifice bunt, stole second and scored on a Randy Enoch single to give the game-winning run.

David Terry relieved Mickey Harris in the fourth to capture the

winning run sixth inning lifted the Christians to a 6-0 lead in the final game. A&T's three runs in the seventh were not enough

and Elon took the game 6-3. Last Saturday Elon swept a twinbill at Mars Hill in convincing fashion. The Christians trailed 10-2 in the bottom of the third inning of the first game and were behind 14-12 going into the final inning. But Elon's seven-run burst in that frame carried the team to a 19-14 victory.

Then in the second game Greg McDannold (6-2) pitched a five-hitter as the Christians routed the Lions 17-1.

High Points Panthers ended the Christians' 12-game winning streak last Monday with a 9-8 victory on Elon's Newsome Field. Elon, behind ace right-hander Greg Harris, took a 5-2 lead into the eighth inning, but the visitors scored five times on three hits, three walks and an error. A bad hop double by David Barra provided the game-winning RBIs.

High Point tallied two more runs in the top of the ninth, then held off Elon in the bottom of the inning. The Christians' Barry Culberson hit a three-run homer but the rally fell a run short.

Harris took his first loss of the 1985 season against five wins. High Point improved its record to 22-12.

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