

Tigers' Toughness Prevails Over Wake Forest
By Cade Crenshaw
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CLEMSON -- With just one series left in the regular season, Clemson's main mission now is to keep their postseason hopes alive. They took a step in the right direction on Thursday night with a 4-3 win against Wake Forest.

Wake Forest looked to be the hot team early on as they loaded the bases in the first inning courtesy of two walks and a double allowed by Clemson pitcher Mat Clark. However, Clark began his streak of dominance just as the Demon Deacons were getting their offense started. After getting out of the bases-loaded jam in the first without surrendering a run, Clark retired the next 12 Wake Forest batters he faced. Clark was phenomenal on the mound for Clemson lasting 6.2 innings and allowing three runs off four hits while striking out nine. "Give a lot of credit to Mat Clark he was absolutely outstanding tonight," said Coach Monte Lee on the sophomore's performance.

Grayson Byrd gave the Tigers an early 1-0 with a home run to center in the first inning. The solo shot by Byrd, who's offensive production has surged in the last three weeks, was his eighth in the last eleven games. "Byrd might be the hottest hitter in the country right now," said Coach Lee.

Freshman Bryar Hawkins added to Clemson's lead in the second inning with his seventh home run of the season.

To win tough games, teams often have to make sacrifices along the way. The Tigers did just that in the fifth when Logan Davidson's sacrifice fly and Kyle Wilkie's sacrifice squeeze bunt brought home two runs to push the Tigers lead to 4-0.

The Demon Deacons plated an unearned run in the sixth inning and capitalized on a defensive error by Clemson to score two additional unearned runs in the seventh and drew closer to the Tigers lead of now just one run.

For teams to perform well down the last stretch of the season heading into postseason play, they must show a mental toughness. Monte Lee was pleased with his team's efforts while holding onto a one-run lead in the final two innings. "One thing I told the team is that we showed toughness by being up by one run with six outs to go. (Sam) Hall made a great play in the eighth after a leadoff double, now they had the tying run

on base. We wind up not giving anything there and then we made two great plays in the infield in the ninth to preserve the win," said Lee.

Both the coaches and the players know how important a win on Thursday was towards both their late push for a postseason position in the field of 64 teams and the series win against Wake Forest.

“It was huge. We know every game from here on out is giving us a chance to play in the postseason so every game for us is like a do or die, winner go home pretty much,” said closer Carson Spiers on the win, “They say they all mean the same but a Friday night win definitely means more than a Sunday night win.”

According to D1Baseball’s Latest Projected Field of 64, Clemson is the last team in the field while Wake Forest is the first team left out of the postseason. The series will continue on Friday at 6pm at Doug Kingsmore Stadium.

Clemson 2, Wake Forest 0
WFU 000001200---372 CLEM 11002000X---453

Pitching

WP - Clark, 6.2 IP, 4 H, 1 R, 4 BB, 9 SO LP - Peluse, 6 IP, 4 H, 4 R, 5 BB, 6 K

Hitting

WFU - Seymour, 2-5, 2B, 3 RBI

CLEM - B. Hawkins 1-3, HR; Byrd 1-3, HR; Wilkie 1-3, RBI; Davidson 0-2, RBI