

Portfolio

University of Pittsburgh



Aaron Becker

Media Relations Internship

Recaps

Pitt Edged by Kent State in Homestand Finale

PITTSBURGH – The University of Pittsburgh baseball team fell to Kent State Wednesday afternoon, dropping a 6-4 decision at Charles L. Cost Field in the finale of a six-game homestand.

"I really like the quality at bats that our 2-3-4 hole hitters, the veteran part of our lineup, really strung together to help get us a lead today," said head coach Mike Bell. "I was really proud of our defense, the way that we played catch around the field and made plays. We just want to continue to attack the strike zone, pitch with a lead and eliminate the free passes, which for me, was the difference in the ball game. Tip your cap to Kent State, who did a great job of capitalizing with two outs and coming up with the clutch hits, but we've got to continue to do a better job at not giving away free passes and giving them the extra opportunities."

Pitt got on the board first, plating two runs in the first inning to grab an early advantage. Three straight walks would load the bases with no outs, as a bases loaded walk to David Yanni scored the first of the game. A sacrifice fly by Nico Popa would score Cole MacLaren as the Panthers took a 2-0 lead.

Kent State would put up its first run of the day the fourth inning, cutting the Pitt lead in half with a single into left field.

Pitt built on its lead in the fifth, working some smart base running to take a 3-1 lead. Connor Perry would draw a leadoff walk, stealing both second and third before a double by MacLaren allowed the senior to score.

Kent State would respond with a big sixth inning, putting up three runs to take its first lead of the game, 4-3. The teams would exchange runs in the seventh, but the Golden Flashes would put it away in the eighth, extending the advantage to 6-4 with a solo homer.

Redshirt junior Derek West earned his first start of the season, tossing 3.0 perfect innings, striking out a pair. Chris Gomez, David Moore (1-3) and Chase Smith all saw action out of the pen. Dan Hammer would close things out, letting up one hit and striking out one in the final frame.

Pitt would tally just two hits on the afternoon, coming off the bats of Yanni and MacLaren. The Panthers would, however, draw eight walks, paced by two from Perry, Yanni and Ron Washington Jr.

The Panthers return to ACC play this weekend, traveling to Virginia for a three-game slate with the Cavaliers.

Pitt's Offensive Explosion Leads to Series Finale Victory over North Carolina

PITTSBURGH – The University of Pittsburgh softball team recorded season-highs in hits, runs and home runs in its series finale victory over North Carolina Saturday afternoon at Vartabedian Field.

The Panthers dropped their opener in the Saturday doubleheader, 6-2, before reeling off a 14-5 five-inning victory in their series finale with the Tar Heels.

"I think we just needed the opportunity to show that we know that this is what we're capable of," said head coach [Jodi Hermanek](#). "To finally to get it against a great pitching staff - at UNC there are no slouches in the circle – it was great to see. They [North Carolina] have a couple of really great, talented pitchers at the top of the conference right now, so to get it from them I think is even bigger. I'm just super happy that this team came out with the offensive grind this weekend."

Redshirt sophomore [Brittany Knight](#) started on the mound for Pitt in game one, allowing six earned runs in 2.1 innings of action. Freshman [Abby Edwards](#) entered the game in relief of Knight, tossing 4.2 innings of scoreless ball.

The Panthers collected five hits at the plate, with seniors [Gabrielle Fredericks](#), [Olivia Gray](#) and [Alexis Solak](#), junior [Connor McGaffic](#) and sophomore [Hunter Levesque](#) all recording one hit apiece.

In game two, senior [Taylor Rahach](#) earned the start, allowing three earned runs in 2.1 innings of work. For the second consecutive contest, Edwards entered the game in relief, picking up the win while allowing just one earned run and striking out one in 2.2 innings of play.

The Panthers poured it on at the plate, recording season-highs in hits (15), runs (14) and home runs (five). Of the 14 runs, Pitt collected an astounding 10 of them in the third inning.

"It was just a lot of fun," said Hermanek. "I think we saw three pitchers throughout that second game. We went up and down the lineup getting some pinch hits and great at-bats from players like Sarah [Seamans] and Morgan [Batesole]. Morgan goes out there and hits her first college home run and sprinted around the bases faster than anyone could see.

"It was just a great opportunity for us to come and watch our good hitters do what we know they're capable of doing."

Eight different batters contributed to the Panthers 15 hits, including a perfect 4-for-4 game from Levesque, who also added two runs and one RBI. Solak went 3-for-4 at the plate to go along with a run and RBI, while Gray posted a 2-for-3 showing while adding four RBI and two runs. Fredericks rounded out the multi-hit group with a 2-for-3 performance, collecting four RBI while blasting two home runs.

McGaffic, junior [Alexee Haynes](#), sophomore [Morgan Batesole](#) and freshman [Katlyn Pavlick](#) each added one hit apiece in the matchup, with Pavlick collecting her team-high sixth long ball of the season and Batesole recording her first career home run.

SCORING SUMMARY – GAME ONE

North Carolina got on the board first, scoring four runs in the second inning to take an early lead.

The Tar Heels then used a two-run long ball in the third inning to earn a 6-0 advantage.

Pitt scored its first run of the game in the fourth inning, with junior [Walker Barbee](#) using a sac fly to send home Solak.

The Panthers added another run in the fifth frame, with Fredericks sending a single through the left side of the infield to score Levesque, but ultimately couldn't muster enough offense to catch the Tar Heels.

SCORING SUMMARY – GAME TWO

The Tar Heels again took an early lead in game two, scoring two runs in the second frame to get out in front of the Panthers.

Pitt answered in the bottom of the inning, with Fredericks sending a solo shot over the left field wall to make it 2-1.

North Carolina put the score at 3-1 in the top of the third, using an RBI-single to extend its lead.

The Panthers again answered in the bottom of the inning, this time in dramatic fashion, collecting a ridiculous 10 runs in the frame. Pitt collected its runs via a solo shot by Pavlick, two-run homer by Gray, three-run long ball by Fredericks, RBI-double by Levesque, two-RBI single by Gray and an RBI-double by Solak.

The back-and-forth continued into the fourth inning, with the Tar Heels adding two runs to put the score at 11-5.

Pitt again answered at the plate, with Batesole using a three-RBI home run over the left field wall to give the Panthers a 14-5 lead and the eventual win.

UP NEXT

The Panthers will close out their homestand with a 4 p.m. matchup against Ohio State Wednesday, April 3 at Vartabedian Field.

Pitt Drops Defensive Duel to Ohio State in Extras

PITTSBURGH – The University of Pittsburgh softball team dropped a 5-2 extra-innings contest to Ohio State Wednesday night at Vartabedian Field.

The Panthers used a two-run long ball by senior [Gabrielle Fredericks](#) in the sixth inning to tie the game at two apiece, but ultimately couldn't keep their momentum going, surrendering three runs in the ninth frame to give Ohio State the win.

"It was a great game," said head coach [Jodi Hermanek](#). "For a few innings, they [Ohio State] ended up getting one, two, and then we had some clutch timely hitting with that huge bomb on a change up by Gabby [Fredericks] and it put us right back into the swing of things. I felt like things were really rolling and then unfortunately that delay kind of threw us off. But, they're good hitters, and we had the opportunity right there in the ninth to get back in it with two runners in scoring position as well. So, I'm just happy to see us offensively continue to put runners in scoring position and produce at the plate."

Freshman [Abby Edwards](#) earned the start for the Panthers, allowing one earned run while striking out two in 3.2 innings of work. Redshirt sophomore [Brittany Knight](#) entered the game in relief of Edwards, allowing just one earned run in 4.2 innings of action. Senior [Taylor Rahach](#) entered the game in the ninth, surrendering three earned runs in 0.2 innings before Edwards re-entered to close things out.

Offensively, the Panthers produced five hits at the plate. Fredericks, senior [Alexis Solak](#) and juniors [Alexee Haynes](#), [Kaitlyn Kruger](#) and [Connor McGaffic](#) each recorded one hit in the contest, with Fredericks adding a long ball in the matchup.

SCORING SUMMARY

The game was scoreless through three innings before Ohio State got on the board in the fourth, with a double down the left field line sending home the first run of the contest.

The Buckeyes earned a two-run lead in the fifth, using a solo shot to make it 2-0.

With a runner on second and one down in the bottom of the sixth, Fredericks sent a long ball over the right field wall to tie the game at two apiece.

The matchup remained at a stalemate until the ninth frame, where the Buckeyes scored three runs to earn the eventual 5-2 victory.

UP NEXT

The Panthers will head to Columbia, Mo., to face Missouri and Oregon in the Mizzou Tournament beginning Friday, April 5.

Player Bios

4 - BRYCE O'FARRELL

CAREER: Has appeared in 16 outings, including eight starts, for the Panthers.

2018: Appeared in 16 games, making eight starts for the Panthers ... finished the season with a .171 average to go along with seven hits, six runs and five walks ... compiled 16 assists and 12 putouts in the field ... went 1-1 with three walks and two runs in a 9-5 win against Youngstown State ... hit 1-1, adding a run in a 15-3 victory over MD Eastern Shore ... hit his lone double of the season, going 1-4 against ACC foe Notre Dame.

HIGH SCHOOL: Was a member of the Ontario Blue Jays club team ... hit .426 with 37 RBI and 32 stolen bases as a sophomore ... hit .451 with 19 doubles and four homers in his junior season ... hit .486 with two homers and five doubles in 11 games as senior ... was the rookie of the year at Notre Dame High School ... was the Junior Athlete of the Year and Senior Athlete of the Year at Notre Dame High School ... also played basketball ... in 2015, the U16 Ontario Blue Jays won the Pastime National Championship ... was named the tournament MVP ... team won the Northeast Regional for the Mickey Mantle World Series, finished fourth overall ... Notre Dame High School won the Ontario Provincial Championship in 2015 ... in 2016, Notre Dame finished third in the Ontario Provincial Championship.

PERSONAL: Born Feb. 5, 1999 ... son of Steve and Jenny O'Farrell ... as an older sister, Tenima and two older brothers, Andrew and Reese.

12 - CHASE SMITH

CAREER: Has appeared in 22 contests as a Panther ... named to the 2019 NCBWA Stopper of the Year Preseason Watch List.

2018: Made 22 appearances on the mound for Pitt in his true freshman season ... went 1-1 with one save and a 3.16 ERA to go along with 20 strikeouts and a .191 opponent average in 31.1 innings ... ranked first on the team in opponent average and second in ERA ... recorded 11 assists and two putouts in the field ... earned a save against Butler after surrendering just one hit while striking out two in 3.0 innings ... recorded a win against ACC rival Miami, adding a strikeout in 1.0 inning on the rubber ... struck out five in 1.2 innings against Louisville.

HIGH SCHOOL: Was a two-year varsity starter at Pope High School ... freshman and sophomore seasons played on the JV team ... as a sophomore won the team's CY Young award ... Pope won the regional championship and was the Class 6A State runner up in his junior season ... Pope won the regional championship and was the Class 6A State champion as a senior ... as a junior he was All-County Honorable Mention by the Marietta Daily Journal, Georgia Dugout Club Honorable Mention and a Perfect Game All-America Honorable Mention ... as a senior was a 1st Team All-State pitcher by the Georgia Dugout Club and Marietta Daily Journal,

was a 1st Team All-Region and All-State pitcher, was named one of the 16 best players in the Metro Atlanta area ... set a Pope single season record with 12 wins ... as a senior pitched to a 1.32 ERA with 84 strikeouts and a record of 12-1 ... was a 2017 All-America Honorable Mention by Perfect Game.

PERSONAL: Born June 7, 1999 ... son of Brian and Jenny Smith ... has two siblings, Devyn and Sutton.

24 - DAVID YANNI

CAREER: Has appeared in 11 outings ... has earned the start in 101 contests.

2018: Started in all 55 games for the Panthers at shortstop ... hit .231 on the season to go along with 45 hits, 43 walks, 36 runs, 36 RBI, nine doubles and five home runs ... ranked first on the team in walks, second in runs, tied for second in doubles, ranked third in RBI, tied for third in home runs and ranked fourth in hits ... compiled 167 assists and 73 putouts on the year ... ranked first on the team in assists and fifth in putouts ... recorded a career-high five RBI in an 18-5 victory over MD Eastern Shore after going 2-4, adding three runs, one home run and one triple ... hit a career-high two doubles in Pitt's ACC Tournament win against North Carolina after batting 2-4 and adding two runs, one walk and one RBI ... went a perfect 3-3 to go along with three runs, two RBI, one double and one walk in a 21-1 victory over Saint Peter's ... hit 1-1 with four RBI, three walks and two runs in a 17-3 win against Toledo ... went 3-5 in a 15-10 victory over Virginia Tech, adding three runs, two RBI, one home run, one double and one walk.

2017: Earned the start in six outings before missing the remainder of the season due to injury ... hit .273 in his 22 at bats, tallying six hits, including five RBIs and a double ... opened the year with a hit and RBI in the opener against Delaware (Feb. 17) ... was 1-4 against Kansas State ... went 2-4 in the finale of the Sunshine State Classic against Delaware, adding a pair of RBIs ... went 1-4 with a pair of RBIs and a run scored in the opener against Siena ... made his last start in the first game of the doubleheader against Siena, going 1-4.

2016: Made 50 appearances, including 40 starts as a true freshman infielder for the Panthers ... finished the season with a .226 average (36-159) ... added nine doubles, one triple and one home run ... recorded 18 RBIs and a slugging percentage of .314 ... drew 23 walks and was hit by four pitches for an on-base percentage of .333 ... was a perfect 3-3 in stolen base attempts ... added eight multiple-hit games on the season ... contributed three multiple-RBI outings including two two-RBI days and one four-RBI performance ... recorded the game winning RBI on two occasions ... scored the game winning run once on the year ... ended the season with a three-game hit-streak ... recorded a season-best four game hit streak ... ended the season on a four-game reached base streak ... recorded a season-best 10-game reached base streak ... earned his first collegiate start in Pitt's season opener against Niagara (Feb. 19) ... went 2-3 with four RBIs and three runs scored, including his first collegiate home run ... drew a walk and recorded two putouts in his debut ... helped Pitt to a series finale win at nationally ranked North Carolina (March 13) ... was 2-3 with a run scored and a walk as Pitt downed the Tar Heels 5-0 ... was 1-1 with an RBI, two walks and a stolen base in Pitt's win over Florida State (March 20) ... went 1-3

with a pair of RBIs as Pitt downed Boston College on March 26 ... helped Pitt to a series victory at Virginia Tech ... went 5-10 with two RBIs and two runs scored on the weekend ... added a double and a walk in the three-game series ... entered the game as a pinch hitter on April 20 against Youngstown State ... was 2-4 with two RBIs and a run scored, including a double ... added a pair of hits, an RBI and three runs scored in a three-game series with Miami (OH) ... concluded the season with a pair of starts against Duke ... went 3-8 with a run and a double in the two-game series.

HIGH SCHOOL: Attended Central Buck High School East in Doylestown, Pa. ... finished his senior season with a record of 11-3 and was named First-Team All-Sol Continental Conference as well as First-Team All-Southeastern PA ... went 9-7 and collected Second-Team All-Sol Continental Conference and Second-Team All-State as a junior ... received First-Team All-Sol Continental Conference honors in his sophomore season ... also played basketball as a freshman.

PERSONAL: Born Nov. 17, 1996 ... son of Glenn and Pamela Yanni ... has an older brother, Stephen, and an older sister, Alyssa.

31 - NICO SAMARKOS

CAREER: Has appeared in five games for the Panthers.

2018: Appeared in five games for Pitt ... hit .333 on the season in three at-bats, adding two RBI, a walk and a triple ... compiled eight putouts on the year ... went 1-1 with two RBI and a triple in a 15-3 win against MD Eastern Shore ... recorded a walk in a 17-3 victory over Toledo.

HIGH SCHOOL: Was a four-year letterman at Gainesville High School ... started as the team's catcher for all four seasons ... freshman team won the district championship after going 13-15 ... was named the Rookie of the Year ... earned Gainesville Sun All-Area Honorable Mention ... won the Scholar Athlete award ... sophomore team went 13-13 ... won the Gainesville Golden Spikes Award and the Scholar Athlete Award ... earned Gainesville Sun 1st Team All-Area ... as a junior, the team went 16-10 ... Was named to the Gainesville Sun All-Area Honorable Mention team ... won the Scholar Athlete Award ... senior team won the county championship after going 19-7 ... was named to the All-Tournament Team of the Florida League Invitational ... earned the fourth-straight Scholar Athlete Award ... was a member of the Spanish Honor Society ... won the President's Award for Educational Excellence all four seasons.

PERSONAL: Born Oct. 16, 1998 ... son of John and Maria Elena Samarkos ... has an older brother, Andres.

42 - LUCAS MALDONADO

CAREER: Has appeared in three contests for the Panthers.

2018: Made three appearances on the mound for Pitt after joining the Panthers from Southern Union State ... recorded an 11.57 ERA, striking out two in 2.1 innings of action ... threw a scoreless inning against Saint Peter's ... struck out one in 0.2 innings of scoreless action against Toledo.

2016-17 (at Southern Union State Community College): Played two seasons at Southern Union State Community College ... in 2016 started nine games, making 10 appearances ... pitched 48.2 innings with a 2.22 ERA and 30 strikeouts.

HIGH SCHOOL: Was a member of the Iona Prep baseball team ... team was the runner up in the CHSAA state title as a sophomore ... did not compete as a junior due to Tommy John surgery ... received the Coaches Award for showing perseverance and determination in his comeback from Tommy John surgery as a senior ... also played basketball and football.

PERSONAL: Born Jan. 18, 1997 ... son of Danny and Patricia Maldonado ... has an older sister, Brianna, and an older brother, Daniel.

Game Notes

125: #9 Brent Fleetwood (NDSU) tech. fall [Brendon Fenton](#) (UP), 15-0, 5:58 – NDSU leads 5-0
133: #5 [Micky Phillippi](#) (UP) dec. #17 Cam Sykora (NDSU), 2-0 – NDSU leads 5-3
141: [LJ Bentley](#) (UP) dec. Sawyer Degen (NDSU), 7-5 – Pitt leads 6-5
149: [Robert Lee](#) (UP) dec. Jaden Van Maanen (NDSU), 3-2 – Pitt leads 9-5
157: Luke Weber (NDSU) dec. #8 [Taleb Rahmani](#) (UP), 10-4 – Pitt leads 9-8
165: #20 Andrew Fogarty (NDSU) dec. [Jake Wentzel](#) (UP), 7-5 – NDSU leads 11-9
174: [Gregg Harvey](#) (UP) dec. Lorenzo De La Riva (NDSU), 7-5 – Pitt leads 12-11
184: #13 [Nino Bonaccorsi](#) (UP) dec. Michael Otomo (NDSU), 12-5 – Pitt leads 15-11
197: [Kellan Stout](#) (UP) dec. Cordell Eaton (NDSU), 2-0 – Pitt leads 18-11
285: #13 [Demetrius Thomas](#) (UP) maj. dec. Dan Stibral (NDSU), 14-5 – Pitt wins 22-11

125: #4 Nick Piccininni (OKST) tech. fall [Brendon Fenton](#) (UP), 21-6, 3:59 – OKST leads 5-0
133: #4 [Micky Phillippi](#) (UP) dec. #2 Daton Fix (OKST), 3-1 – OKST leads 5-3
141: #13 Kaid Brock (OKST) pins [LJ Bentley](#) (UP), 0:32 – OKST leads 11-3
149: #5 Kaden Gfeller (OKST) pins [Robert Lee](#) (UP), 0:58 – OKST leads 17-3
157: Wyatt Sheets (OKST) dec. #10 [Taleb Rahmani](#) (UP), 9-3 – OKST leads 20-3
165: [Jake Wentzel](#) (UP) pins Andrew Shomers (OKST), 1:48 – OKST leads 20-9
174: #5 Joe Smith (OKST) maj. dec. [Gregg Harvey](#) (UP), 11-3 – OKST leads 24-9
184: #11 Jacobe Smith (OKST) dec. [Nino Bonaccorsi](#) (UP), 7-4 – OKST leads 27-9
197: #10 Dakota Geer (OKST) dec. [Kellan Stout](#) (UP), 7-2 – OKST leads 30-9
285: #2 Derek White (OKST) dec. #13 [Demetrius Thomas](#) (UP), 9-8 – OKST wins 36-9

125: Zurich Storm (NCST) dec. [Brendon Fenton](#) (UP), 13-6 – NC State leads 3-0
133: #5 [Micky Phillippi](#) (UP) maj. dec. John Devine (NCST), 17-5 – Pitt leads 4-3
141: Jamel Morris (NCST) def. [LJ Bentley](#) (UP), SV-1, 4-2 – NC State leads 6-4
149: #8 Justin Oliver (NCST) maj. dec. [Robert Lee](#) (UP), 15-7 – NC State Leads 10-4
157: #4 Hayden Hidlay (NCST) dec. #11 [Taleb Rahmani](#) (UP), 3-2 – NC State leads 13-4
165: Thomas Bullard (NCST) dec. [Tommy O'Brien](#) (UP), 6-1 – NC State leads 16-4
174: [Gregg Harvey](#) (UP) dec. #20 Daniel Bullard (NCST), 6-4 – NC State leads 16-7
184: #13 [Nino Bonaccorsi](#) (UP) maj. dec. #3 Nick Reenan (NCST), 8-0 – NC State leads 16-11
197: [Kellan Stout](#) (UP) dec. #20 Malik McDonald (NCST), 5-4 – NC State leads 16-14
285: #14 [Demetrius Thomas](#) (UP) maj. dec. Deonte Wilson (NCST), 17-5 – Pitt wins 18-16

Recorded, Edited, & Transcribed Interviews for Social Accounts

https://twitter.com/Pitt_FB/status/1116462176527626242

 **Pitt Football**  @Pitt_FB · Apr 11

"The guys took great pride in getting better every day."

Coach Cory Sanders provides an update on the Pitt safeties this spring.

#H2P



3,796 views 0:01 / 5:10

  12  75 

https://twitter.com/Pitt_FB/status/1116452109551988736

 **Pitt Football**  @Pitt_FB · Apr 11

"Everybody in our room could start."

Entering his senior season, Damar Hamlin likes the depth Pitt is building in the defensive secondary.

#H2P



4,301 views 0:01 / 2:37

  21  153 

https://twitter.com/Pitt_FB/status/1116442043642011648

 **Pitt Football** @Pitt_FB · Apr 11

"Nobody is relaxed. We're fighting for a spot and playing time."

As spring nears its conclusion, Chase Brown knows the battle for playing time is just beginning on the Pitt offensive front.

#H2P



5,242 views 0:01 / 3:40

2 36 123

https://twitter.com/Pitt_FB/status/1113920428202971137

 **Pitt Football** @Pitt_FB · Apr 4

"We haven't had a bad practice. The attitude is great. Lots of energy."

Coach Pat Narduzzi provides an update after the Panthers completed the 10th practice of spring drills.

#H2P



5,698 views 0:05 / 5:55

1 10 87

https://twitter.com/Pitt_FB/status/1113910362422874112

 **Pitt Football**  @Pitt_FB · Apr 4

"Guys are making plays everywhere."

TE Will Gragg is excited by the potential for Pitt's passing game under new offensive coordinator Mark Whipple.

#H2P



5,376 views 0:05 / 4:09

1 7 51

https://twitter.com/Pitt_FB/status/1113900295057096704

 **Pitt Football**  @Pitt_FB · Apr 4

"We're catching a lot of passes."

Pitt tight ends coach Tim Salem provides an update on his position's progress during spring camp.

#H2P



3,407 views 0:05 / 5:25

4 33