

Irish Edge Tulane

Written by Sean Stires
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NEW ORLEANS, La. - Things got interesting late, but the Notre Dame baseball team held on for a dramatic 2-1 win over Tulane Friday night at Turchin Stadium. Each team's starting pitcher was more than solid in a well played game that featured no errors.

Notre Dame's Sean Fitzgerald (1-0) earned his first win of the season with a 6.1 inning outing that saw him retire 15 consecutive Green Wave batters after giving up a single to Tulane leadoff man Brennan Middleton in the bottom of the first inning. Tulane starter Tony Rizzotti (0-1), who pitched a complete game shutout in last week's season-opener, yielded ND's two runs on four hits in 6.0 innings.

Eric Jagielo gave the Fighting Irish their only runs of the night with a two-run opposite field home run to left in the top of the sixth inning. The third baseman leads Notre Dame (3-1) with three home runs and 10 RBIs through four games.

Tulane scored its only run in the seventh inning on a sacrifice fly to right field by first baseman Sean Potkay. The Green Waves advanced the potential tying run to third base in both the eighth and ninth innings, but Irish closer Dan Slania got the Irish out of jams both times with a 1.2 inning save (1).

"It wasn't my best outing," the 6'5, 275 pound Slania said afterward. "I'm glad I got the win for the team. It was a good outing and good way to start down here."

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After he got the last two outs of the eighth with the tying runner at third, Slania saw the Green Waves load the bases in the top of the ninth after Middleton singled to start the frame. After a sacrifice bunt by Briggs Barrios and a walk by Brandon Boudreaux, Sean Potkay singled to right field after falling behind 0-2. Potkay fouled off several pitches before coming up with the hit.

Tulane opted to hold Middleton, the tying run, at third rather than risk a play at the plate. Garrett Cannizaro proceeded to rip Slania's first two fastballs foul down the left field line before Slania struck him out with a breaking ball.

"I kept going with the fastball and trying to beat him with a fastball," Slania recounted. "Then I threw that curveball to get that big second out. It was a good difference in pitches. I just need to start working down a little bit more and get the ball down."

Andrew Garner's fly ball to centerfield four pitches later ended the game with the bases loaded for Tulane. The game was the opener of a three-game series for the Irish. First pitch of Saturday's game is 3 p.m. ET. The series concludes Sunday at 1 p.m. ET.