
Rangers Roundup & Gazette

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29 cents

Rangers Battle but Fall to Braves

JONES COUNTY, GA. This one was a nail-biter through four and a half innings, but the Braves broke it open in the bottom of the 5th to top the C-Ball Rangers 9-5. The evenly matched teams scrapped and clawed and kept fans on the edge of their seats, swapping one-run leads back and forth, until the wheels came off the Rangers' wagon in the late innings. Playing in their second night-cap game under the lights in three days, the boys fought to rally in their last turn at bat but just ran out of juice.

Newly acquired pitcher/coach Stephen Blair threw a whale of a game, getting the start out of the bullpen after Coach Chip was a last-minute "scratch" with a sore shoulder. Coach Chip is listed as "day to day," and we won't know if he will be "disabled" until game time today. But Coach Stephen stepped up big-time, with remarkable pitch control—throwing a slider, a big sweeping curveball, a two-seam fastball clocked at 97 mph, and a changeup that slowed to an amazing 33 mph on the radar gun.

"He's got a whole arsenal of pitches, there," Coach Chip said after the game. "I wanted him to pitch good, but now I'm afraid he's after my job! I'll throw left-handed tomorrow if I have to just to keep him off the mound!"

Fans knew they were in for a treat when both teams' defenses limited the scoring to one run apiece in the opening frame. Only Drake Daughtry scored in the top half, driven in by Kyler Blair's hard single. All six Rangers hitters put the ball in play in the 1st, but the stingy Braves defense made three solid putouts, stranding two Rangers on base.



In the bottom half the Rangers defense got payback. The leadoff Brave scored, but sharp-fielding Bo Mansfield, borrowed again from the Athletics, fired a bullet from right-center to second base, holding all-star Joshua Burney to a single. Then another Braves all-star, Daniel Weber, popped up to Drake Daughtry, and Drake "doubled off" Joshua by stepping on first base before the runner could scramble back. Going back to Tuesday's game, Drake's "DP" gave the Rangers double plays in three straight innings! That's really rockin' and rollin', fellas!

Chandler Sharp and Bo Mansfield singled in the 2nd but the Rangers failed to score. Then in the bottom of the inning came the game's most thrilling play, when the three Ranger all-stars combined to retire Preston Wilderman in a "real-deal" big-league-type "rundown." Kyler Blair fielded a slow roller and threw to Gregory Hunter, stopping Wilderman in his tracks between first and second. Gregory rifled the ball to first and Drake Daughtry chased Preston towards second, throwing a strike *back* to Gregory, who smoothly applied the tag. If you're scoring at home, folks, that's a 1-4-3-4 putout!! Bigtime, man! That's what these all-stars do—that's just how they roll!

The Braves pushed one across in the 2nd to go up 2-1. The Rangers responded with two runs in the 3rd inning, Kyler Blair driving in

(See "Rangers Fall to Braves" continued on p. A2)

Game 15 Line Score	R	H	E
Rangers	1 0 2	2 0 0	5 16 0
Braves	1 1 2	0 5 x	9 17 0

Rangers Fall to Braves

(Continued from A1)

Gregory Hunter and William Allen Whiddon. Kyler showed exactly why he bats cleanup by knocking in three of the team's five runs.

So in the middle of the 3rd it was Rangers 3, Braves 2. Before the guys could even take a breath, however, the *Braves* answered with two runs to go up 4-3 after three innings. And then—you guessed it!—the doggone *Rangers* turned the tables by getting two runs to *retake* the lead, 5-4, on the strength of hits by Donnie Hale, Bo Mansfield, Drake Daughtry, and Gregory Hunter.

At this point, on his way out to left field Zack Chance appeared to say, "The way we keep on switching who's winning every inning, it's kinda like we're on a see-saw, you know?" And it also appeared that Donnie Hale, on his way to right, replied, "Nah, Zack, it's really more like we're playing ping-pong!" Lip-reading is not an exact science, of course. . . .

In any case, Justin Franks "picked" a hard-hit line drive at third and made a perfect throw across the diamond to Drake Daughtry at first to end the 4th. Then, wouldn't you know it, the Braves just *had* to keep it "tit-for-tat" by holding the Rangers scoreless in the 5th— this time stranding Justin at second base and Chandler Sharp at first.

If the game could have ended there in the middle of the 5th, the Rangers would have won, 5-4! Wouldn't that have been awesome?!!

Alas, it wasn't to be. The Braves overcame injuries to two baserunners in the bottom of the 5th—one who had to be carried off the field after colliding with (and being tagged out by) rock-solid second baseman Gregory Hunter—they scored five, and the Rangers just couldn't make up the four-run deficit in the 6th.

As Coach Liz put it, though, "We'll dang sure get 'em next time! We want revenge, Braves!"

We would be remiss not to mention what a splendid job Will Pritchard did behind the plate, getting his first start at catcher after working *hard* to get there all season long. Attaboy, Will! You earned it, buddy!



AP Photo courtesy of Marchant Mansfield
Bo Mansfield, in Athletics green, being awarded the game ball for his outstanding positive attitude and his valuable contributions at the plate and in the field. Nice work, son!

Stat Watch:

Batting average	AB	H	AVG.
Drake Daughtry	54	51	.944
Kyler Blair	50	37	.740
William Allen Whiddon	50	36	.720
Gregory Hunter	43	25	.717
Jesse Dixon	31	21	.677
Justin Franks	43	25	.581
Will Pritchard	47	21	.447
Chandler Sharp	39	13	.333
Donnie Hale	28	9	.321

RBI (Runs Batted In)	G	RBI
Kyler Blair	14	33
William Allen Whiddon	14	29
Gregory Hunter	13	20
Justin Franks	13	13
Chandler Sharp	14	13
Will Pritchard	14	12
Drake Daughtry	14	12
Jesse Dixon	9	11

Runs Scored	G	R
Drake Daughtry	14	41
William Allen Whiddon	14	26
Kyler Blair	14	22
Gregory Hunter	13	17
Justin Franks	13	13
Jesse Dixon	9	11
Will Pritchard	14	8

Home Runs	G	HR
Gregory Hunter	13	3
Drake Daughtry	14	3
Jesse Dixon	9	2
William Allen Whiddon	14	1

On Deck: last game of the season, fellas. Friday, today, vs. Braves @ 6:00 (5:15 practice). Let's play hard and end the year with a big ol' giant hairy WIN! Go, Rangers, Go! Go, Rangers, Go!



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