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UA BASEBALL

Better, stronger

Rehabbing Berger solid as Cats win 10th straight

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Arizona's Eric Berger moves a little closer every day to being the pitcher he wants to be.

Berger, who had Tommy John surgery in July 2006, pitched UA to a 4-2 win over visiting Washington State Sunday at Sancet Stadium. The Wildcats (25-11, 6-6) have won 10 straight games.

Berger, a lefty, threw 112 pitches and went eight innings - his longest outing since the surgery on his elbow.

"We needed a pitching performance (like that)," coach Andy Lopez said. "We were down at the very end of our rotation. He was marvelous."

"He's getting better every day, getting a little bit more arm strength, a little more velocity."

Berger (4-2) struck out eight and didn't walk anyone in allowing two earned runs on seven hits. UA took the lead in the bottom of the eighth when Bobby Coyle singled in the go-ahead run.

"(My arm) feels really good," Berger said. "I haven't had pain since surgery. It's just finding the release point. I'm back. I felt like a pitcher today and I want to do that every time."

His previous high this season was six innings of relief against Cal State Fullerton.

"He's nasty. He's just nasty," Coyle said. "He's got a lot of good pitches, throws hard. And watching him on the mound, he brings a lot of experience."

"You just know that we are going to be all right when he is on the mound."

Berger kept the game close with his solid pitching, and allowed the offense to do its job in the later innings.

The Wildcats were hurt by some sloppy early baserunning. UA's only run in the first six innings came in the fourth on a wild pitch by WSU's Chad Arnold that allowed Coyle to score.

Arizona tied the game at 2 in the bottom of the seventh thanks to a baserunning error.

Dillon Baird hit a single but ran into a pickle and was tagged out by Washington State shortstop Shea Vucinich.

But the rundown left both third base and home plate open, allowing C.J. Ziegler to score.

UA's Jason Stoffel needed 11 pitches in the ninth to earn his seventh save.

UA hosts New Mexico for two games beginning at 6 p.m. Tuesday at Sancet Stadium. The second game is at noon Wednesday.

The Wildcats swept New Mexico in two games in Albuquerque last week.