Rebels drop series against No. 1 Arkansas

Ole Miss dropped its weekend series to No. 1 Arkansas after splitting the doubleheader and losing the finale 18-14. Here’s how the series went.

**Game One**
After a rain cancellation on Friday, junior Gunnar Hoggland opened up for the Rebels on a beautiful Saturday afternoon at Swayze Field. He pitched 5.1 innings with eight strikeouts and no runs. Arkansas tied the game in the sixth inning and then quickly scored four more runs in the following two innings. Ole Miss shuffled through their bullpen looking for a pitcher to stop the scoring but was unsuccessful. The five pitchers that came to the mound in game one for the Rebels and had an average ERA of 2.51.

However, the most troubling statistic for the Rebels was the number of runners left on base. In three separate innings, Ole Miss had bases loaded, and each time, left all runners on base. The Rebels had 14 hits, leaving 13 runners on base, and only scoring three runs. Ole Miss had no problem hitting, but struggled to score. The Rebels dropped game one to the Razorbacks, 7-3.

**Game Two**
Game Two started off almost identical to the first, though the Rebels seemed more enthusiastic. Head coach Mike Bianco compared Game one to being “punched in the mouth.” It was clear the Rebels weren’t going to allow that again.

Junior Doug Nikhazy started on the mound and did what he does best: disrupt. Nikhazy pitched for 5.2 innings with seven strikeouts and seven hits for four runs. The Razorbacks failed to score for four innings, and when they did, Ole Miss was already out of reach.

“I think one of the big roles of a starting pitcher is to put up zeros but to also create energy in the dugout,” Nikhazy said. “The message interpreted by myself was to go out there and stay in the fight no matter what happens. I tip my cap to them. They’re very aggressive.”

The Rebels led 8-6 as they headed into the bottom of the eighth. Showing no mercy, Ole Miss added five more runs and extended their lead to seven. Kevin Graham, Hayden Dunburst, Bench and John Rhys Plummer helped to add insurance runs, making it an easy close for pitcher Taylor Broadway. The Rebels beat the Razorbacks 13-6 in the second game of the doubleheader.

**Game Three**
Looking for the series win on Sunday, Ole Miss started sophomore Derek Diamond on the mound. Uncharacteristically, Diamond gave up two home runs early and left the game after only 1.1 innings. Freshman Josh Mallitz entered the game only to give up five more runs, making it 10-0 in the second. Mallitz lasted 1.1 innings before sophomore Wes Burton came in and closed out the inning.

The Rebels’ luck turned toward the better in the third inning after a Cael Baker walk, a Jacob Gonzalez double and an RBI single by Peyton Chatagnier. Ole Miss steadily closed the deficit to 14-14 at the end of the seventh inning. Unfortunately, Arkansas ticked on four more runs to win the series.

The Rebels outplayed Arkansas 14-13 in hits but walked 17 Razorbacks, which ultimately cost them the game. Bianco was ejected from the final game but reflected on the resilience his team showed while making a coming back. Bianco also made it clear that the pitching in game three needed to be improved.

“I lost my composure. I will say I am proud of (the team),” Bianco said. “You’re down 11-0, and it didn’t look good. It’s human nature to concede and our guys didn’t do that … You walk 17 guys and hit two. I can’t remember a day that we were that bad on the mound.”

Meanwhile, Ole Miss fans set a program record for series attendance with 33,423 fans in attendance this weekend.