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BASEBALL

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Baseball Drops Road Slugfest To Northern Illinois, 8-7

Flames and Huskies combined for six homers; Johnson and Hallberg go deep in one-run defeat.

April 25, 2006

[Box Score](#)

DeKalb, Ill.- On a day when the wind was vigorously blowing out, the UIC baseball team posted its share of runs but came up one short in a narrow 8-7 road loss at the hands of Northern Illinois at Ralph McKinzie Field on Tuesday.

The Flames (22-15) pounded out 13 hits, with two of them going over the wall for home runs, but NIU (20-20) used four long balls to overcome the UIC offensive attack.

[Justin Johnson](#) hit a home run for the fourth consecutive game, going 3-for-5 at the plate with two RBI in the process.

[Mark Hallberg](#) went 3-for-4 with an RBI and two runs scored, while [Larry Gempp Jr.](#) scored two runs during a 2-for-4 afternoon.

[Ben Trotter](#) also drove in two runs.

The Flames opened the game with four straight singles and Trotter's sacrifice fly to plate two runs.

UIC's lead was cut in half in the bottom of the second when NIU designated hitter Brian Toner hit a solo shot to left center.

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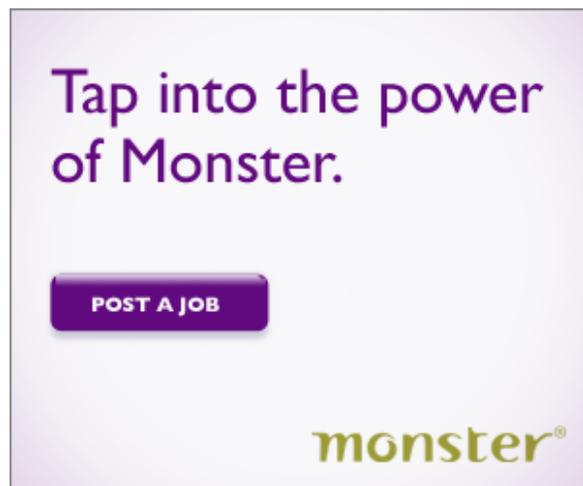
Justin Johnson homered for the fourth straight game on Tuesday.

The Flames tacked on two more in the top of the third, as Trotter launched a shot to left center that barely missed going over the wall. [Bart Babineaux](#) scored from first on Trotter's three-base hit, which was followed by [Ted Rosinski's](#) RBI single to plate Trotter.

The Huskies used the long ball to knot the game in their half of the third. Pat Minogue led off with a solo shot, and Toner hit a two-run homer that created a 4-4 deadlock.

Northern Illinois took a one-run lead in the fourth, when a two-out bloop hit to left and a stolen base by Minogue turned into a score on Bobby Stevens' single.

But UIC answered right back in the next inning. Gempp singled, moved to second on a passed ball and got to third on Babineaux's flyout before Johnson singled him home.



NIU posted two runs in its half of the fifth inning on a two-run homer by Brian Smith to take a 7-5 lead.

Hallberg trimmed the Flames' deficit by a run with his third home run of the year, launching a shot over the left centerfield wall.

An RBI single by Marc Besteman in the bottom of the seventh put NIU back up by two runs, but the slugfest continued in the top of the eighth when Johnson led off the frame with a blast to center to trim the NIU lead to 8-7.

But that's how it would end, even though the Flames had a quality scoring threat with one away in the top of the ninth. Hallberg singled and Gempp reached after getting hit by a Matt

German pitch. A wild pitch advanced both runners into scoring position, but German retired the final two hitters to end the game.

[Zach Wright](#) was charged with the loss, giving up four runs in three innings of relief.

[Jake Wasechek](#) made his first collegiate start, allowing three runs in two innings.

UIC hosts Cleveland State in a three-game series this weekend, beginning with a doubleheader on Saturday at 12:00 p.m. at Les Miller Field.

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