

SIUE softball has eight games in six days in Florida trip

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EDWARDSVILLE – SIUE softball plans to stay busy this week with eight games in six days in Clearwater, Florida.

It all starts Tuesday with a neutral site game against Penn at 11 a.m. On Wednesday, the Cougars face South Dakota State at 9 a.m. followed by LaSalle at 11 a.m.

The Cougars, who enter the week with an 11-4 record, then play in the Under Armour Showcase (University of South Florida) beginning Friday with games against Holy Cross, Providence, IPFW, Saint Joseph's and South Dakota State.

SIUE Head Coach [Sandy Montgomery](#) said the Cougars will respect their opponents yet focus on their own game.

"We have goals for the week, and that is one of them – to not underestimate anyone and to make sure we are playing to the level that we need to play at no matter the opponent," she said.

SIUE has been idle since travelling to the Baylor Tournament Feb. 24-26. Montgomery said the Cougars had some productive practice time since its last trip.

"It allows you an opportunity to work on some things that you weren't successful with for the first 15 games," said Montgomery.

Junior [Maria Prete](#) said this week is about continuing to get better as a team.

"We really focused on fundamentals and all of the things that will win games," said Prete.

Even with the good start to the season, Prete said the team will continue to work on its confidence.

"It has come a long way. We'll be even more confident as the season continues," she added.

Redshirt freshman [Zoe Schafer](#) leads the starters in hitting with a .354 batting average that includes 17 hits. Freshman [Kalei Kaneshiro](#) leads the Cougars in extra-base hits with eight. Both Schafer and Kaneshiro lead the team in home runs with two.

SIUE's pitching staff holds a team earned run average of 2.64 with 122 strikeouts in 103.1 innings pitched.

"We're making strides," said Montgomery. "[Haley Chambers-Book](#) is throwing well. [Ashley Koziol](#) threw well in her last outing as did [Emily Ingles](#)."

"I feel good about the level we are playing at," added Montgomery. "We just have to continue to play hard no matter who are opponent is."