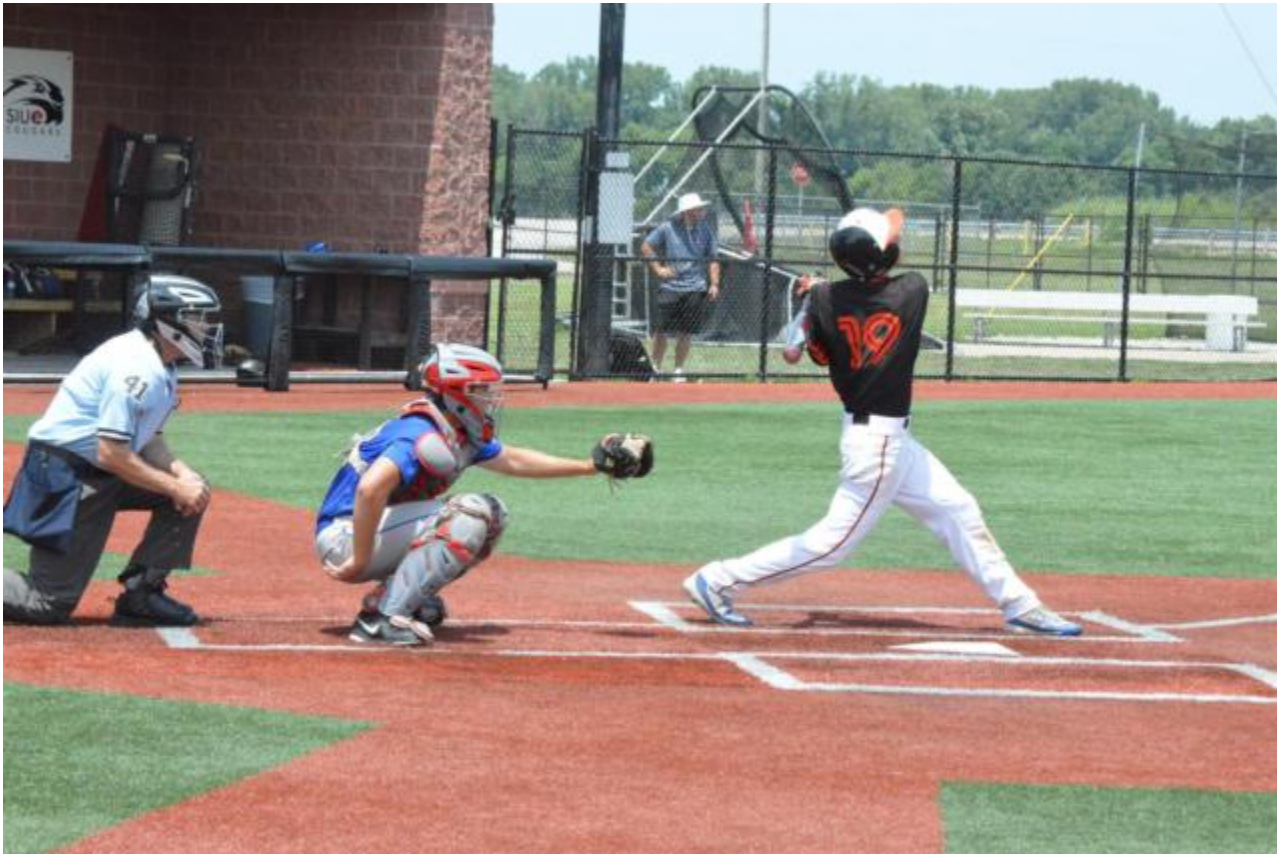
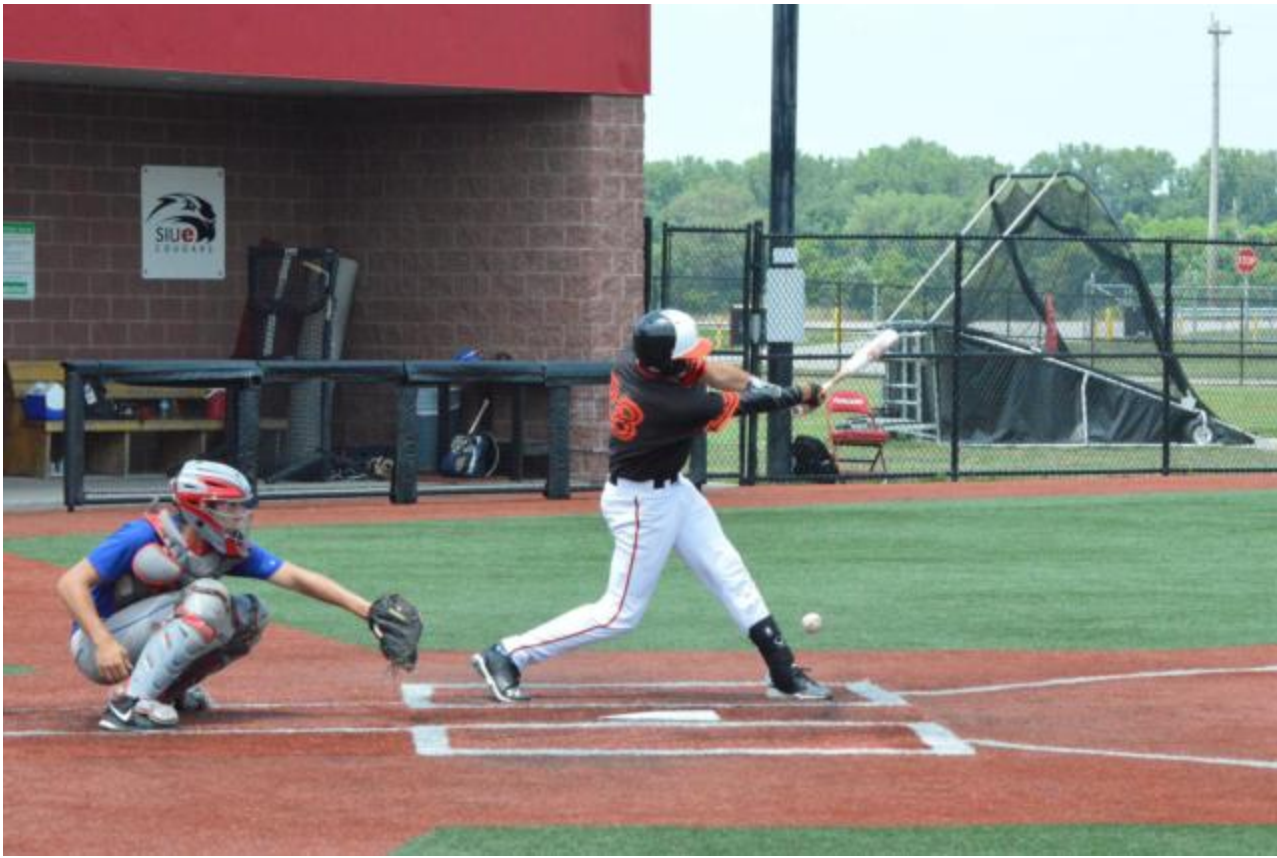


Edwardsville's summer baseball team gives younger players experience

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – Edwardsville's summer baseball team is a vehicle to give younger players in the program experience that will help them down the road as they grow into the EHS program.

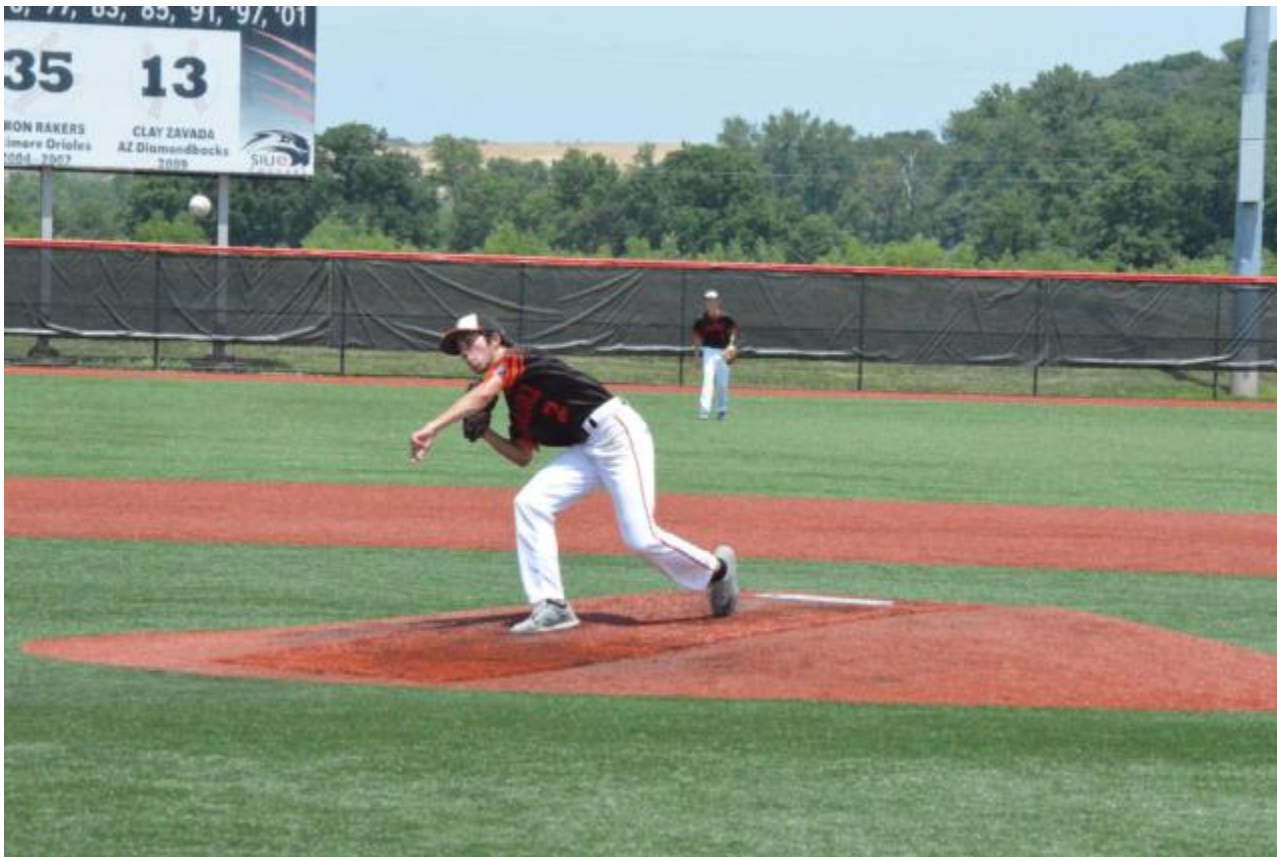
There is a learning curve involved in playing for the team; Tiger coach Tim Funkhouser acknowledged that as the Tigers dropped an 8-3 decision Friday afternoon to the Peoria-based Central Illinois Outlaws in their second game of the St. Louis Invitational tournament presented by Diamond Sports Enterprises at SIU-Edwardsville's Roy Lee Field.

The loss dropped the Tigers to 0-2 on the summer and in group play with two more games to come Saturday morning.

“It's part of the learning process,” Funkhouser said after the game, “and like we just talked about with the team, it's a learning curve that's a little quicker for some of our younger guys; you're going to have more failure and we know that going in. I think sometimes you talk to players about that to players that they don't understand it at first.

“We've had teams that have had that before; Aaron Jackson, who's coaching with us this year, he talked about it the same experience when he was a sophomore. We had a lot of failure then, but we started learning from it and started doing better with it – all of a sudden, the confidence came and success came as well.”

The Outlaws draw from a large pool of schools in the Peoria area to build their teams. “They're all well-schooled and they'll have a lot of kids who move on to the college ranks,” Funkhouser said. “Their hitters are very good; I thought Lucas (Clayton) did a good job for where he is at this point; he left a few pitches over the plate, but that's just learning mistakes.”



The Outlaws went ahead 2-0 in the top of the first on a RBI single and sacrifice fly to right, but the Tigers cut the lead to 2-1 in the bottom of the frame when Blake Burris led off with a triple and came home on an Aaron Young RBI grounder to second. The Outlaws extended the lead to 3-1 on a lead-off homer from Kyle Weeks in the second, then scored three more runs in the fourth and three in the fifth, highlighted by a solo homer from Trevor Davis.

Edwardsville got two runs back in the bottom of the seventh when Jonathan Yancik scored on a Zac Crutchfield grounder to first and Chase Goeckel scored on a Burris double.

Burris led EHS with a 3-for-4 day, including a double and triple and a run scored; Young was 1-for-3, Yancik had a run scored and Goeckel was 1-for-3 with a double and run scored. Clayton got the start and took the loss for Edwardsville.

Edwardsville plays two games Saturday morning at Clayton's Shaw Park, facing Rawlings Black at 9 a.m. and the Missouri Outlaws South team at 11:30 a.m. to finish group play. The final is set for 2 p.m. Sunday at UMSL's baseball field.