

Morehead State's Freese's ninth-inning grand slam is difference-maker in game with SIUE baseball

April 16 2018 2:45 PM



EDWARDSVILLE – Morehead State designated hitter Jordan Freese's ninth-inning grand slam was the difference Sunday as the Eagles defeated the Cougars 11-6 to sweep a three-game Ohio Valley Conference baseball series.

The Cougars have lost eight in a row and fell to 7-25 overall and 3-15 in OVC play. Morehead State improved to 23-14 and 11-4.

With the game tied at 6 going into the ninth inning, Cougar reliever Braydon Bone walked MSU's Reid Leonard. Connor Pauly followed with a single and then Hunter Fain reached on a bunt single. Freese then lined a 1-0 pitch down the right field line for the grand slam.

"The game was decided by a grand slam," SIUE Head Coach Sean Lyons said. "I don't think (Morehead State) had an extra base hit until that one, but it was clutch. It was a big one."

The Eagles added another, unearned, run in the inning for the final margin. Bone (0-1) allowed four runs over 1 2/3 innings in relief. He struck out two.

The Cougars had tied the game with a run in the bottom of the eighth inning. Brock Weimer reached on a fielder's choice bring home Jordan Ross, who had singled with one out.

Weimer put the Cougars out in front in the first inning, drilling the first pitch he saw to straight away center for his fifth home run of the year, and his second in as many days. Jordan McCunn scored on the hit after bouncing a two-out double over the left-center field fence.

McCunn stretched SIUE's lead to 4-0 with a two-out, two-run homer of his own in the fifth inning. Aaron Goecks scored in front of McCunn after drawing a walk.

SIUE starter David Llorens held the Eagles at bay over a 4 1/3 inning start. Llorens, making his first weekend start, did not allow a run, gave up just one hit and struck out a career-high nine hitters.

"David threw really well," Lyons said. "One hit over 4 1/3 is impressive. He has good stuff, but he threw 99 pitches in 4 1/3 innings. It's hard to really take advantage when the pitch count piles up. He is learning and getting used to it. He did what we needed him to do today, but we'd love to be able to stretch him out a little bit further."

Morehead State scored twice in the sixth inning to trim the lead to 4-2. It was 5-2 in favor of SIUE when the Eagles scored four times on four hits in the seventh to take a 6-5 lead.

The Cougars collected nine hits, but stranded 12 runners on base.

"It's tough to overcome," Lyons said. "It's the difference in the game. They got some clutch hits when they had guys on base and we didn't. It's been the story for our team up to this point. All we can do is just keep plugging away. One of these days we're going to be the ones to come through with the big hit."

Ross, Weimer and McCunn all finished the day 2 for 4 for SIUE. Freese was 3 for 4 with six RBIs to lead MSU.

SIUE will play at Illinois State Tuesday afternoon before hosting Saint Louis Wednesday. The Cougars travel to UT Martin for an OVC series Friday-Sunday.

"We have two midweeks and then we're off to UT Martin," Lyons added. "We get two opportunities to keep building confidence going into next weekend."