

Famed softball coach Sandy Montgomery ends long tenure at SIUE

by Joe Pott
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EDWARDSVILLE - Southern Illinois University Edwardsville legendary softball coach Sandy Montgomery is retiring effective October 1, 2018. SIUE Director of Athletics Dr. Brad Hewitt made the announcement today after informing the softball team members.

In the interim, Montgomery will focus on her administrative responsibilities through October 1 and will not be involved in the day-to-day running of the softball program.

The longest-tenured Cougars head coach, and one of the most successful, Montgomery concluded her 30-year SIUE career with a record of 1,051-540-2, for a winning percentage of .660.

"We are grateful for all of Coach Montgomery's contributions to Cougar athletics during her SIUE tenure," Hewitt said. "Her teams not only performed at a championship level on the field but also carried that excellence into the classroom. Her loyalty and dedication to this University is immeasurable. The successes she brought to the University are significant. Her contributions to our Division I journey irreplaceable; her Alumni every year remain consistently engaged with our program. We all wish her well in her future endeavors. She will be missed by so many.

"Knowing first hand her tremendous impact, I know she cannot be easily replaced, and the person will need to build upon the traditions and grow into the role," Hewitt continued. "Thus, our wisest choice was to name SIUE softball Associate Head Coach Jessica Jones an interim successor to Coach Montgomery. A press release announcing her interim appointment as head coach will be available soon."

Montgomery also served as a Cougars associate director of athletics and helped lead the department from the NCAA Division II ranks to NCAA Division I membership in 2008.

Among her greatest achievements as a coach was leading the Cougars to their only softball national championship in 2007. That team also earned a spot in the SIUE Athletics Hall of Fame.

SIUE began its Division I journey in the 2009 season with a 40-10 record. The Cougars completed the Division I transition by winning the OVC Tournament in 2014, earning an automatic bid to the NCAA Division I Championship.

Montgomery's Accomplishments at SIUE

National Champions – 2007

NCAA Division I Tournament Appearances – 2014

Great Lakes Regional Champions - 2006, 2007

NCAA-II Tournament Appearances - 1990, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008

Conference Titles - 2002, 2003, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2014

OVC Regular Season Titles - 2015

National Coaching Staff of the Year – 2007

Regional Coaching Staff of the Year - 2003, 2006, 2007

Conference Coach of the Year - 1997, 1999, 2001, 2002, 2015

11 All-Americans since 1989

57 All-Region players since 1989

79 All-Conference players since 1995

50-win seasons - 2002, 2006

40-win seasons - 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2015, 2017

30-win seasons - 1989, 1990, 1991, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2004, 2013, 2014

14 straight 30-win seasons - 1996-2009

Montgomery first came to SIUE in the fall of 1981 as a student-athlete under Head Coach Cindy Jones. She was inducted into the SIUE Athletics Hall of Fame as a player after setting many of the school records for pitching. While coaching all of the players who would go on to break her records, she continues to hold the record for the lowest earned run average in a career (0.85) and shutouts (42).

Coach Montgomery stated, "It's been a great run, and I've really enjoyed working with so many great student-athletes. I am very thankful for my time at SIUE. It has been my home for more than half of my life. There are so many people who have been instrumental in my career that I would like to thank; Cindy Jones, Vaughn Vandegrift, Brad Hewitt, Valerie McCoy, my family, especially my father for his endless support, and of course Coach Jones for her loyalty and dedication to our program from the moment she arrived on campus. Throughout my years, I have been fortunate to coach and build amazing relationships with many tremendous players. These relationships will continue to be an important part of my life. There is never a good time to coach that final season as I have always found myself waiting for another class to graduate. I am in a great place in my life right now. Softball and SIUE will always be a huge part of my life, but the time has come. As I have always said, once a Cougar, always a Cougar."

Montgomery's record at SIUE

Year

Record

1989

35-24-1

1990

34-13

1991

35-16*

1992

22-21*

1993

23-24

1994

18-25-1

1995
24-19
1996
34-17 (12-6)
1997
39-13 (21-0)
1998
33-23 (19-5)
1999
33-17 (13-3)
2000
39-19 (16-6)
2001
41-17 (17-5)
2002
51-12 (17-2)
2003
44-11 (17-3)
2004
35-19 (15-5)
2005
41-15 (15-3)
2006
52-11 (16-4)
2007
49-8 (19-5) #
2008
49-11 (19-5)
2009
40-10
2010
27-24
2011
28-30 (19-11)
2012
23-29 (13-16)
2013
35-13 (17-5)
2014
30-23 (19-5)
2015
43-16 (20-6)

2016

28-26 (15-11)

2017

2018

41-13 (13-5)

25-21 (14-8)

*SIUE was issued two forfeits in each season.

Conference record in parentheses

#National Champions