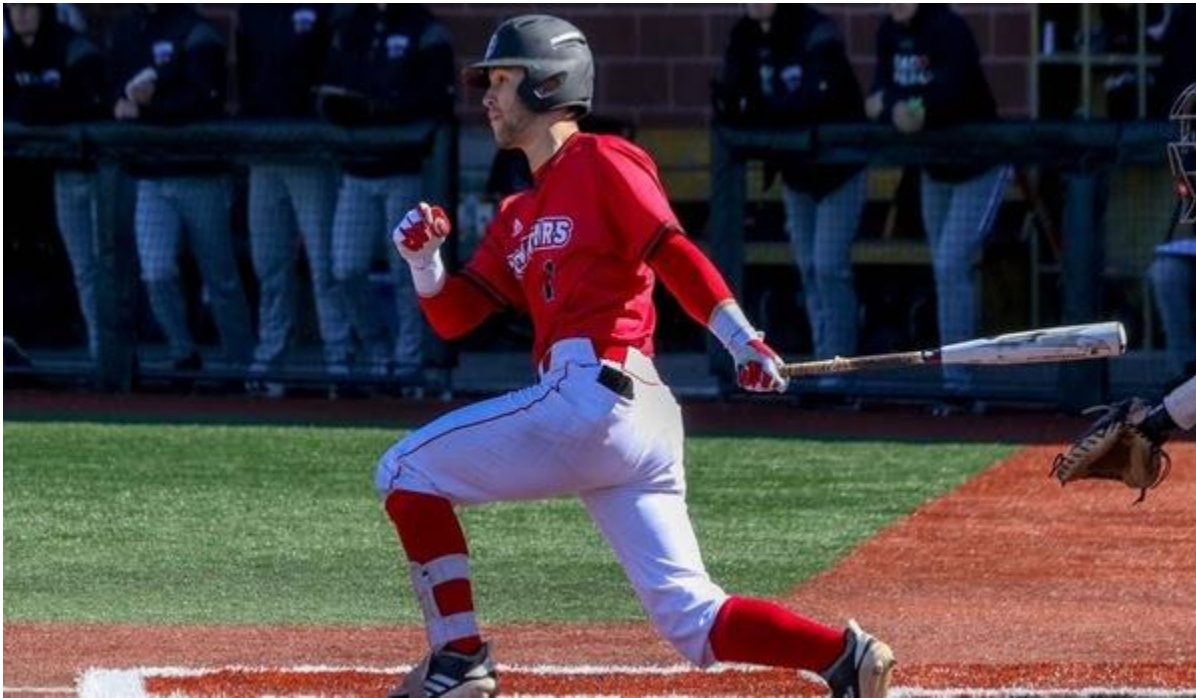


Belmont Scores Five Runs in Bottom of Eighth to Defeat Cougars Baseball Team 10-7

by Joe Pott

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Belmont scored five runs in the bottom of the eighth inning to erased a 7-5 SIUE lead and the Bruins defeated the Cougars 10-7 in the finale of three-game Ohio Valley Conference baseball series at E.S. Rose Park.

The Cougars dropped two of three in the weekend series and fell to 4-5 in the OVC and 7-13 overall. Belmont maintained its hold on first place at 7-2 in the OVC. The Bruins are 12-11 overall.

The eighth inning opened with three consecutive walks from SIUE right-hander Cole Milam. Braydon Bone relieved Milam and issued a walk to force in a run to bring Belmont within a run at 7-6. After a strikeout, Belmont's Chandler Adkins and Devon Gardner smashed back-to-back two-run doubles to put the Bruins on top for good.

"I brought Bone into a tough spot," SIUE Head Coach Sean Lyons said. "Unfortunately we weren't able to limit the damage."

For the third straight day in the series, Belmont opened the scoring. The Bruins got on the board in the first after Grayson Taylor reached on a wild pitch after striking out. He then went to second on another wild pitch by SIUE starter Kenny Serwa. Gardner singled to drive Taylor home with the game's first run.

Like the previous games, SIUE had an immediate answer. The Cougars took control in the top of the second inning. Justin Perkins reached on an error with one out before Garrett Carmichael singled to put runners on the corners. Jordan Ross laid down a squeeze bunt, bringing Perkins to the plate to tie the game while reaching first in the process. Carmichael then scored on a wild pitch. Eric Giltz walked with two outs in the inning and Dustin Woodcock was intentionally passed to load the bases for Brock Weimer.

Weimer lined a pitch into left field. Belmont leftfielder Hunter Holland made a diving attempt only to have the ball get under him and to the wall for a three-run triple to make it 5-1. Raul Elguezabal followed with a single to right to plate Weimer and give SIUE a 6-1 lead.

Belmont scored single runs in the second and third innings before the Cougars added a run in the fourth on an RBI-double by Peyton Cordova-Smith to go up 7-3. Belmont scored twice in the fourth to cut it to 7-5.

"It was nice to jump on them early with the big second inning," Lyons said. "They were able to chip away at the lead over the first four innings. We just weren't able to ever deliver a knockout blow."

Weimer finished 3-5 with the three RBIs. He was 6 for 9 with five RBIs over the last two games of the series.

"Brock bounced back from a tough day on Friday," Lyons said. "He had some big hits and really produced the rest of the weekend."

Carmichael was 2-4. SIUE finished with nine hits for the game.

Serwa, who was making his first appearance of the year, worked three innings and allowed three runs on five hits. He did not walk a batter and struck out one.

"I am pleased to have Kenny back on the mound," Lyons said. "That will strengthen our staff."

Ryan Byrd gave up a pair of runs in 1 1/3 innings of relief. Chris Robinson finished the fifth after Belmont put two on with one out. The Bruins stranded both runners against Robinson.

"Chris Robinson did a nice job getting us out of that jam in the fifth," Lyons said.

Milam came on to start the sixth inning and retired the first six batters he faced, including five by strikeout before trouble befell the reliever in the eighth.

"Cole was electric for two innings before trouble brewed in the eighth," Lyons said.

He was charged three runs in two innings. He walked three, struck out five and fell to 0-1.

Belmont's Kyle Brennan worked 4 1/3 innings out of the bullpen, allowing just a single SIUE hit. He struck out two. He improved to 3-2 with the win.

Logan Bowen worked the ninth, allowing a single base runner on an error, for his fourth save of the year.

Adkins and Gardner each had two hits and three RBIs for Belmont. Holland finished the game 3-5 with an error.

SIUE plays host to Saint Louis Tuesday night at Simmons Complex.