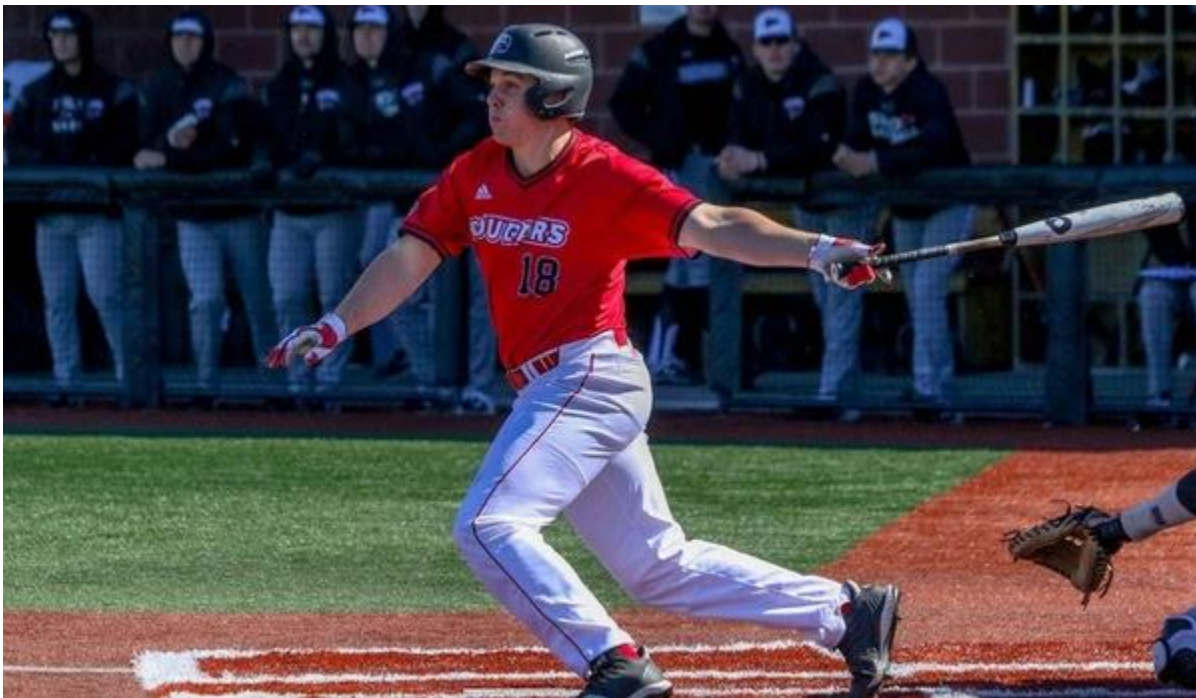


SIUE Opens With 8-5 Win Over Nicholls State

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THIBODAUX, La. – SIUE baseball christened the 2020 season with an 8-5 win over Nicholls State Friday in the opener of the Baseball on the Bayou Classic.

It is the first season-opening victory for SIUE since 2012, when the Cougars defeated Memphis.

The Cougars erased a 3-1 deficit with a four-run sixth inning and then broke a 5-5 tie with a three-run ninth inning.

"The thing that stands out for me is the way the guys competed," SIUE Head Coach Sean Lyons said. "Our guys responded when (Nicholls State) took a 3-1 lead and again after they tied it. I couldn't be more proud of the way they kept battling."

After SIUE scored in the first, thanks to an RBI from Raul Elguezabal, Nicholls State scored a pair of unearned run in the bottom of the inning to go up 2-1. It was another error that put the Colonels up 3-1 in the fifth. All three runs came against SIUE starter Colin Baumgartner.

Baumgartner worked five innings, allowed two hits and the three unearned runs. He struck out six.

"Colin really pitched well," Lyons said. "He threw strikes. "He pitched as if he had been on the mound for several weeks already."

Steven Pattan collected two RBIs and Josh Ohl added an RBI in the Cougars' sixth. The fourth run of the inning came in on a passed ball. Justin Perkins drove home two with a single and Brett Pierson added a sacrifice fly in SIUE's three-run ninth inning.

"We felt pretty prepared coming into the series," Lyons said. "You never know though, until you get out there. We have a lot of new faces in the lineup."

Perkins, Ohl, Brady Bunten and Connor Kiffer each had two hits for the Cougars, who finished with 12 hits collectively.

"I like the athleticism up and down the lineup," Lyons said. "We got two big doubles from Brady (Bunten) in the three-hole and Tyler Bastunas and (Josh) Ohl each had hits in their first college at-bats. We punched out 15 times and that's something for us to work on."

Cole Milam (1-0) finished the game on the mound for the Cougars and earned the win in relief. He worked the final two innings without allowing a run. He struck out five.

The Cougars continue play with a doubleheader tomorrow. SIUE will face George Washington at 2 p.m. before a rematch with Nicholls State at 6 p.m.

"Tomorrow will be a test," Lyons said. "Kenny (Serwa) will get the ball in game one. We have confidence in Kenny and we'll roll from there."