

SIUE Sweeps Tennessee Tech in Series

March 9 2020 9:33 AM



EDWARDSVILLE – SIUE got four home runs from three players on its way to an 11-9 Sunday win and an Ohio Valley Conference series sweep of Tennessee Tech.

The Cougars improved to 8-6 overall and 3-0 in OVC play. Tennessee Tech, which lost for the 11th consecutive time, is 3-11 overall and 0-3 in the OVC.

"That's a great start to us for the Conference season," SIUE Head Coach Sean Lyons said. "It's hard to do. We got a great effort out of some guys offensively."

Brady Bunten paced the Cougars' 12-hit attack. He was 3 for 5 with a three-run home run and a solo shot for four RBIs.

"Brady Buntен had a great day," Lyons said. "It was a windy day. You knew balls in the air were going to have a chance it was likely to be high scoring."

The Cougars put up three different three-run innings.

Buntен's three-run home run in the third put SIUE up 3-2 before Tennessee Tech tied the game in the fourth. Tyler Bastunas singled to drive in a run and Josh Ohl added an RBI-groundout in the fourth and SIUE led 6-3. Buntен's solo homer extended SIUE's lead to 7-4 in the fifth.

The Golden Eagles scored four times in the sixth inning to take the lead 8-7, but SIUE answered again.

"You had to be able to turn the page whether you gave up a few runs or fell behind," Lyons said.

Brett Pierson capped off a three-hit inning with a three-run home run in the bottom of the sixth to make it 10-8. Raul Elguezabal led off the seventh with a home run to make it 11-8. Cody Littlejohn led off the ninth with a home run to cut the SIUE advantage to 11-9.

Freshman Preston Salazar started and worked five innings. He allowed six runs, five of them earned, on four hits. He struck out a career-best seven hitters.

Ryan Swanson, Rob Parks, Braydon Bone and Cole Milam finished the game for SIUE. Parks (1-0) pitched 1.2 innings without allowing a run. He struck out two. Milam allowed the run in the ninth, but struck out two for his third save.

"Preston battled through for five innings," Lyons said. "He gave us a quality start. He gave up a little more than he probably wanted to. But the guys in the pen Parks, Bone and Milam were able to put up some zeroes at the end and help us get the win."

Jacob Parham (0-1) allowed three runs in an inning of work and suffered the loss for TTU. Hunter Higson led the Golden Eagles at the plate. He was 3 for 4 with two runs. Littlejohn was 1 for 2 with the homer and collected three RBIs.

"It's a mental challenge on a day like today," Lyons said. "When we did fall behind there was not panic. Guys knew that (Tennessee Tech) was always one swing away. Our guys did a nice job of continually adding on to add to the lead to help us secure the win."

The sweep is SIUE's first in OVC play since April of 2019 when the Cougars swept UT Martin.

"Our guys are learning and understanding when you have the opportunity in front of you, you have to take it," Lyons said.

The Cougars will face Missouri State Wednesday in Springfield, Missouri. OVC play continues the following weekend at Southeast Missouri.

"We have a lot of guys who need to get some innings," Lyons said.