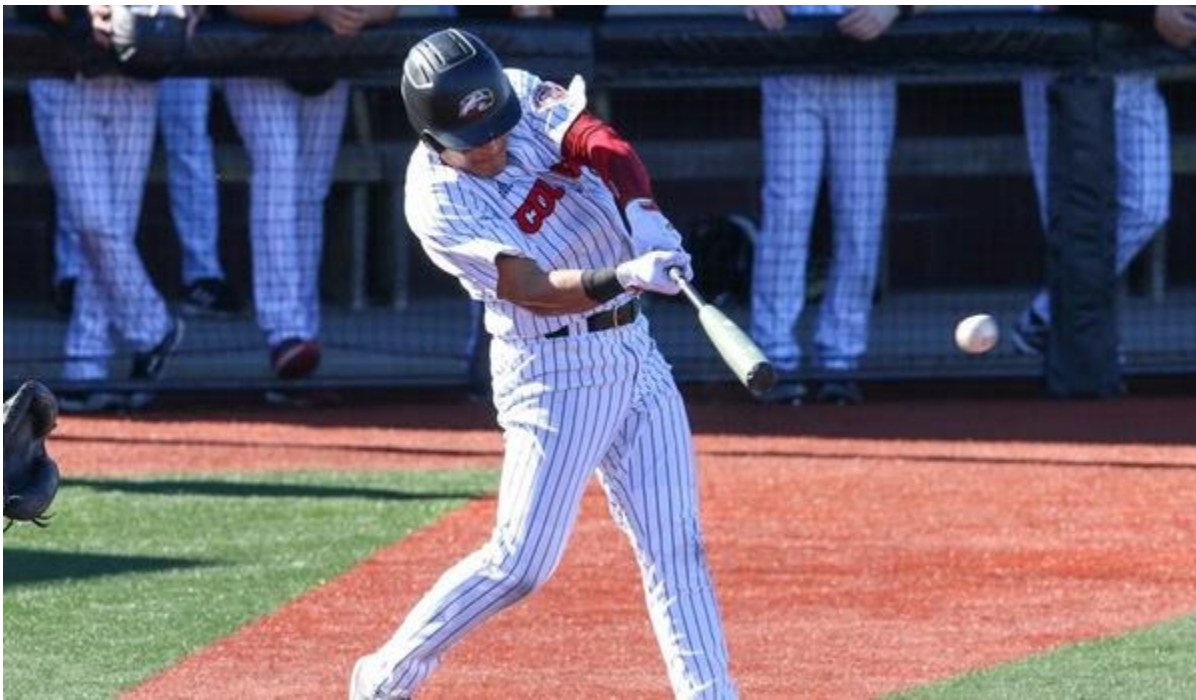


Elguezabal's Three-Run Home Run Lifts SIUE Baseball To 9-7 Triumph

by Joe Pott

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WICHITA, Kan. – Raul Elguezabal's three-run home run with one out in the ninth lifted SIUE baseball to its first win of the year Saturday, a 9-7 triumph over Wichita State in the second game of a three-game series.

The Cougars are now 1-3. Wichita State also is 1-3. The rubber game of the series is set for Sunday.

"I am really happy for the guys! They had great energy from the minute we showed up to the ballpark today and to get one in the win column is a good feeling," SIUE Head Coach Sean Lyons said. "We have to bring the same type of energy and focus tomorrow and try to win a series."

SIUE trailed 7-6 going into the ninth Connor Kiffer singled with one out and Brady Buntin followed with a double to left center. Elguezabal hit a 1-0 pitch from WSU's Aaron Haase (0-1) out to left center to put the Cougars on top.

Braydon Bone worked around a walk and a hit in the bottom of the ninth to save the win for the Cougars. It was his first save of the year. Freshman Noah Matheny (1-0) worked two perfect innings, striking out two for his first win.

"Noah did a great job of keeping the game within striking distance," Lyons said. "I am very happy for him to get his first college win."

Wichita State picked up two runs in the first for an early lead. John Stallcup tied the game for Cougars in the second, driving home two with a single to right field. Stallcup added an RBI in the fourth with a single and Brett Johnson picked up his first RBI on a groundout to put SIUE up 4-2.

The Shockers tied the game with a pair of solo home runs in the fifth before Johnson put SIUE up again with an RBI-double in the sixth.

Wichita State scored three times in the sixth to take a 7-5 lead. Ole Arntson pulled the Cougars within a run with an RBI-groundout in the seventh inning, setting up the comeback in the ninth.

"Battling back the way they did shows some grit," Lyons said. "The guys kept grinding away and Raul came up with the big hit in the ninth."

SIUE finished with the nine runs on 12 hits.

Lyons said the offense had been showing progress each game.

"The guys have been focused on improving the quality of their at-bats," he said. "Their hard work showed today and we get the win. We scored in five different innings. That is a really good sign."

Five players had multiple hits for the Cougars, while the 3-4-5 hitters (Kiffer, Buntin, Elguezabal) each had two hits.

"Those guys have the ability to drive the baseball and be run producers," Lyons said.
"Brady had been scuffling a little bit but his last two at-bats are more like what we have seen out of him."

First pitch Sunday is scheduled for 1 p.m.