

SIUE Freshman Noah Matheny Has Strong Start, Cougars Edge Jacksonville State 4-3 In Baseball

by Joe Pott
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JACKSONVILLE, Ala. – Behind a strong start from freshman [Noah Matheny](#), SIUE baseball edged Jacksonville State 4-3 Friday in the opener of a three-game [Ohio Valley Conference](#) series at Jim Case Stadium.

The win was the Cougars' first over the Gamecocks since March, 2015 snapping a 13-game losing streak in the series.

"It's a great way to get things started," SIUE Head Coach [Sean Lyons](#) said. "Just to pick up a win we needed."

The Cougars improved to 21-19 overall and 11-11 in OVC play. The 11 OVC wins matches SIUE's most under [Sean Lyons](#). Jacksonville State slipped to 22-22 overall and 12-10 in the OVC.

Matheny found himself in a jam early. After the first batter struck out, JSU loaded the bases with a walk and two hits, but Matheny struck out the next two hitters and the Gamecocks left the bases loaded.

"That first inning was some big momentum for him," Lyons said.

The Cougars then took the lead in the second inning on an [Ethan Copeland](#) RBI-single. Jacksonville State catcher Alex Carignan homered in the bottom of the second inning to tie the game.

[Richie Well](#) doubled and [Connor Kiffer](#) singled to drive home runs in a two-run fifth inning to put SIUE on top 3-1. Copeland extended SIUE's lead to 4-1 with a second RBI-hit in the sixth inning.

Matheny worked into the eighth inning, but walked the leadoff hitter before leaving in favor of reliever [Rob Parks](#).

Parks allowed a hit to the first batter he faced, before a balk was called which advanced the runners to second and third. Carson Crowe's two-out hit to right field plated both to trim the lead to 4-3. Parks got Carignan to fly out to end the frame.

Matheny (5-2) allowed two runs on five hits in seven full innings. He walked two and struck out a career-best nine hitters.

"What a great performance by [Noah Matheny](#)," Lyons said. "He gave us what we needed and pitched a really nice ballgame."

[Braydon Bone](#) worked the ninth inning, striking out one and walking one to earn the save, his third of the year and the 10th of his career, which ties him for sixth most all-time at SIUE.

"We had Rob and Braydon to close it out," Lyons said. "They've been our guys all year and they did it again tonight."

SIUE finished with nine hits as a team. "We got some big hits when we need to," Lyons said.

Kiffer and Copeland each had two hits for the Cougars. Copeland drove home two.

"Copeland put up some good at-bats in big situations," Lyons said.

The three Cougar pitchers limited Jacksonville State, which entered the weekend as the second best hitting team in the OVC, to just seven hits. Caignan had two.

The Cougars and Gamecocks will finish the series with a doubleheader Saturday.

"Tonight gives us a lot of confidence but tomorrow is a brand new day," Lyons added.

"We have to play the way we played tonight."