

SIUE Softball Cougars Split on Final Day of Coach B Classic

by Eric Hess

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CARBONDALE, Ill. - SIUE softball closed out the Coach B Classic Sunday with a split, defeating Northern Kentucky 8-3 and dropping a 4-3 contest to host SIU Carbondale.

SIUE Head Coach [Ben Sorden](#) said the Cougars made big strides this weekend.

"I've been very impressed with the progress this team is making," said Sorden. "I have to give a lot of credit to Coach (Courtney) Gentile and Coach (Giorgiana) Zeremenko for the turnaround the offense has had. We out-hit our opponents in all games but one this weekend."

SIUE, which hit .348 for the weekend and doubled the number of its opponent's hits, opened the day with an impressive victory over Northern Kentucky, avenging a loss from Saturday.

[Paige Rocha](#) and [Lexi King](#) combined for five hits in the 1-2 spot in the lineup, propelling the offense that had 10 hits overall.

[Abby Braundmeier](#), who now leads the team having reached base in seven consecutive games, was 2 for 2 and collected four RBIs.

[Sydney Baalman](#) earned her second win in as many days while [Rylie Pindel](#) earned a save in relief. Baalman fanned six and walked just one batter.

The Rocha-King duo collected three of the team's four hits in the nightcap against SIU Carbondale.

Down 2-0, the middle of the lineup picked up the pace in the fourth inning. Lauren Yslava drew a leadoff walk off SIU Carbondale reliever Hannah Hockerman. She moved to second on a sacrifice bunt by [Emma Neuman](#) and scored on a hit by Braundmeier.

Moving to third during the hit on an outfield error, Braundmeier scored from third on a successful squeeze bunt by [Sherri Mason](#), tying the score 2-2.

A two-RBI double in the sixth from Jenna Christenson put the Saluki up 4-2.

SIUE made a final charge in the seventh and scored once on a two-out double from King before the Salukis would close out the game.

"[Kelsey Ray](#) continues to give us solid outings in the circle with four strikeouts and no walks in four innings of relief," added Sorden

SIUE, 3-10, has one more tournament scheduled this spring. The Cougars travel to Memphis, Tennessee, for the Blue City Classic. SIUE takes on Drake twice as well as North Dakota State, and UTSA, and hosts Memphis.

"The team battles until the end, and it is really fun to watch and coach," noted Sorden.