

Cougars Cash in Opportunities in Comeback Baseball Win

by Joe Pott

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EDWARDSVILLE – SIUE baseball erased a 4-0 deficit Friday and picked up a 6-4 win over Omaha in the opener of a three-game series at Roy E. Lee Field.

The Cougars improved to 3-11. Omaha fell to 0-12.

With the game tied 4-4 in the seventh, SIUE loaded the bases with one out thanks to two walks and a hit batter. [Gage Franck](#) was hit by the first pitch he saw to force in [Lucas Spence](#) with the go-ahead run. Pinch hitter [Joshua Heyder](#) then walked to bring in [Ethan Willoughby](#) with the sixth run.

"This was a really good team win," SIUE Head Coach [Sean Lyons](#) said. "You have got to take advantage when you get free bases and are able to get some runners on."

Willoughby tied the game in the fourth inning with an RBI-double which scored Spence from first base. SIUE scored twice in the third inning on a sacrifice fly by Ryan Niedwiedz and a double by Franck. [John Stallcup](#) got the Cougars on the board in the second with a sacrifice fly to right.

Omaha scored four times in the second against SIUE starter [Tyler DeLong](#). Trent Burkhalter's three-run home run followed a walk and a hit batter. The Mavericks picked up two hits to make it 4-0.

"We fell behind early, and the way things have been going, it would have been very easy to pack it in," Lyons said. "But they really fought and chipped away."

DeLong settled in to work five innings. He allowed four runs on four hits. He struck out five.

[Zeus Ponder](#) (1-0) worked 2.2 scoreless innings to earn his first win of the year. He struck out three. [Liam McKillop](#) collected his first save with 1.1 innings to close out the game. He picked up a strikeout.

"We got some huge innings out of the bullpen from [Zeus Ponder](#) and then Liam to finish it," Lyons added. "They really made some big pitches in some key situations."

Willoughby led SIUE at the plate with two hits and two runs. Gage finished with a pair of RBIs.

Burkhalter finished with two hits including the home run and three RBIs.

The two teams will continue the series with a 2 p.m. start Saturday afternoon at Simmons Baseball Complex.