Written by Staff Reports
Friday, 15 February 2013 14:51

Appalachian State University softball opened its 2013 season with a 10-9 victory in eight innings over Southern Illinois on Friday at the FGCU/LaQuinta Inn & Suites Invitational.

The Salukis were the first to light up the scoreboard as they scored an unearned run in the top of the first inning. App State picked up the first hit of the game as Meghan Smith singled through the left side of the infield, but was unable to score.
SIU extended its lead to 4-0 in the top of the second inning as they scored three runs on one hit and a passed ball.
The Apps loaded the bases in the bottom of the second as junior Lindsay Loudermilk came around to score on a fielders' choice, bringing App State within three of Southern Illinois.
The Salukis loaded the bases in the top of third and knocked in three runs on two hits. The first run came in when Lacey Newbold singled through the left side of the field scoring Jayna Spivey. Southern Illinois scored its final two runs of the inning when Taylor Orsburn singled to center field.
Appalachian loaded the bases for the second time in the contest as Loudermilk singled to the edge of the grass allowing Sarah Warnock to score from third. The Black and Gold started a rally as it tacked on its second run of the third inning when Caroline Rogers drew a walk that would score Smith, making the score 7-4.
Loudermilk crossed home on a Cynthia Gomez single to the pitcher that brought the Mountaineers within two of SIU with only one out. The Southern Illinois defense shut down the next two batters as the Apps ended the inning trailing the Salukis, 7-5.
Loudermilk notched her second hit of the contest as she doubled to left center scoring Smith and advancing Allie Cashion to third with only one out in the bottom of the fourth. Cashion was left stranded on third as the Apps entered the fifth inning trailing Southern Illinois, 7-6.
The Salukis tacked on two runs in the top of the sixth inning as they scored two runs on a single down the left field line, taking the 9-6 advantage over the Mountaineers.
The Black and Gold made its third offensive strike in the contest as they loaded the bases in the bottom of the sixth forcing SIU to re-enter starting pitcher Brittney Lang, but was unable to push a run across the plate.
The Mountaineers battled back in the bottom of the seventh as sophomore Dani Heichen had a leadoff walk and advanced to second on a bunt single by Warnock. Heichen crossed home when Smith singled to right center, bringing the Apps within two of the Salukis.
Appalachian capitalized on a Southern Illinois error to score one and would knot the game at nine all when Loudermilk tacked on her fourth hit of the afternoon, bringing in Smith and sending the game into extra innings.
Gomez would be placed on second for the Apps due to international tie breaker rules and advanced to third on a bunt from pinch hitter Whitney Johnson. The winning run crossed the plate when Warnock singled down the left field line allowing Gomez to score from third.
Loudermilk led Appalachian on offense going four-for-four at the plate with three runs batted in, while Warnock, Smith and Gomez each added two hits. Freshman Shivaun Landeros earned her first career victory as she pitched five innings with three strikeouts and allowing five hits,

while Alissa Schoelkopf pitched 2.1 innings with six strikeouts.
The Black and Gold had 12 hits compared to SIU's six with six players on the App State roster tallying a hit and four notching two or more.
With the win Appalachian improve to 1-0 overall on the season, while Southern Illinois falls to 3-3 overall on the season.
The Mountaineers will be back in action at 1:30 p.m. when they take on No. 1 Alabama at the FGCU Softball Stadium.

**Photo Courtesy: Meghan Smith, ASU Athletics**