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The Alestle

Alton - East St. Louis - Edwardsville



Men's basketball recruits three
See Sports

Wednesday, July 1, 2009

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Heat ⚡ strikes

Beating the heat and staying safe in summer weather



Sean Roberts/Alestle

SIUE alumnus Michael Hildebrand and his daughter, Macy, swim at the Cougar Lake Pool last Saturday. The high temperature was 94 degrees.



Sean Roberts/Alestle

A tree near Cougar Village Apartments shows lightning damage after a storm on Sunday. The tree was cut down Monday.

Temperatures peaking early this year says National Weather Service

by Caitlin Doszkewycz
Alestle Reporter

Temperatures reached 98 degrees last week and combined with high humidity, reaching 100 percent in Edwardsville, making the outdoors stifling.

Jon Carney of the National Weather Service said while the temperatures in the area experienced last week were high, they were not unusual for the season.

"What is unusual is that we saw these temperatures so early," Carney said. "We didn't set a record highest temperature, but we did set a record for the warmest minimum temperature. This means that the expected low temperature was higher than normal."

The two record-breaking highest minimum temperatures occurred on June 22 and June 23, 2009, with lows recorded at 80 degrees and 79 degrees, respectively.

However, Carney said that the area would be getting some much-needed relief this week.

"This week will be comparatively mild with temperatures in the mid-80s and rising up to about 90 degrees at the end of the week. We think there may be some rain this holiday weekend," Carney said. "Other than that, temperatures look like they

HEAT WAVE/pg.3

Lightning explodes tree, sets off fire alarms in Cougar Village

by Caitlin Doszkewycz
Alestle Reporter

Lightning struck the SIUE campus Saturday during the large thunderstorm that passed through the area, hitting trees in Cougar Village and setting off a fire alarm.

According to SIUE police Lieutenant Kevin Schmoll, the lightning hit a tree and caused a power surge that went to one of the building's furnaces. As a result, the furnace was damaged and started smoking. Fire alarms then went off in the building and firefighters were summoned.

There were no reported injuries.

In addition to firefighters, Schmoll said members of the Campus Housing Pro Staff were also called to the scene.

"There was no actual fire, but the furnace was damaged. Electricians have been called and they are scheduled to come in on June 29 to fix it," Schmoll said.

In addition to the alarms being set off in CV-531, a number of other fire alarms were set off in other Cougar Village buildings.

"It has happened in the past," Schmoll said. "Thunder causes tense vibrations and that causes the alarms to go off."

LIGHTNING/pg.2

Police Reports

6-23

Jessica Cotton was arrested in connection with driving with a suspended license and operation of an uninsured motor vehicle in Cougar Village Parking Lot 4-C. Cotton was processed, given a notice to appear and released.

6-26

Police issued John R. Hopkins a citation for not having a valid license on South University Drive.

6-27

Police issued Tessa R. Walker citations for expired registration and operation of an uninsured motor vehicle on East University Drive.

Police met with an Outdoor Recreation Pool employee about someone possibly entering the pool area after hours. Caller said there were cigarette butts and beer bottles left behind.

6-28

Police met with three drivers who had minor damage to their cars parked in the Prairie Hall Lot involving an unknown person(s) leaving cottage cheese open in their cars as a prank.

6-29

Dustin S. Cook was arrested in connection with DUI, unlawful possession of drug paraphernalia, unlawful possession of cannabis and disobeying a stop sign on South Circle Drive. Ricky W. Vernoy was arrested in connection with a warrant out of the Granite City Police Department for Failure to Appear. Both were processed, posted bond and were released.

Police issued Brooke N. Walker a citation for speeding on South University Drive.

SIUE to evict failed developer

Alestle Staff Report

The Southern Illinois University Board of Trustees and University Park are seeking legal action to free up land designated to a hotel and conference center to be built by WLS properties in 2004.

A declaratory judgment action was filed in Madison County Monday, to remove construction equipment from the site of the proposed Spring Green Lodge and to free up the plot on Route 157 and University Park for future tenants. As a requirement of the lease, WLS would also have to remove the foundation it constructed when the project began.

"This project has been in the works for a very long time and it is unfortunate it couldn't work out," University Park Director Jim Pennekamp said.

Pennekamp said the lease to WLS was granted

in March 2004, and construction began on the project in August 2004. In the spring, the developer ran into financial problems and aborted the project.

The plan was officially put on the shelf in 2007, when the ground lease between SIUE and WLS expired.

"Clearly the university wanted this project to go through," Pennekamp said. "There were efforts made by the developer and the university, but it never worked out."

If SIUE is granted closure on the failed \$7 million project, the land will once again be available to lease.

Alestle News can be reached at news@alestlelive.com or 650-3527.

LIGHTNING from pg. 1

Lightning is one of the two biggest summer weather hazards, second only to heat, according to the U.S. Natural Hazard Statistics. However, lightning related deaths only occur about one or two at a time, making the threat pretty underrated. The reported number of lightning-related deaths is small, but largely underreported. The National Weather Service estimates that the true number of lightning related deaths per year is more likely between 100 to 120. The average number of lightning related injuries per year is approximately 300.

According to NWS, about 50 percent of lightning casualties occur in open, elevated areas. Another 25 percent occur under trees; a place people commonly assume will keep them safe from lightning. About 14 percent of lightning casualties occur in water. 84 percent of lightning victims are

male and strikes occur mostly in June, July, and August.

Students should remember that lightning is beautiful to look at, but it's dangerous too. The NWS provides these tips for staying safe when lightning is present. First, stay indoors but avoid windows, doors, and metal pipes. Second, do not use electricity appliances during storms and turn off electronics such as televisions, DVD or VHS players and computers. Finally, and most importantly, avoid using the telephone. The majority of indoor lightning incidents in the United States occur because of telephone use.

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Behind the bleach

How your campus rooms get cleaned

by Rosie Githinji
Alestle Reporter

When students move into their residence halls and apartments on campus, they find their rooms clean and all their appliances in working order. What they don't see is all the work that went in to making sure their living space is in the best condition possible.

Associate Director of University Housing Bob Legate works with a team of people to make sure students are moving into rooms that meet SIUE's cleanliness standards.

"The standards are so high, and quality is critical," Legate said.

There is a lot of paperwork involved with the cleaning process, according to Legate. Once a unit is turned over to Housing, it is inspected to make sure it is empty and nothing has been left behind. After the pre-inspection, the unit is released to different crews, who check everything over and fix what is needed.

Each residence hall room or apartment is released to a crew of painters, plumbers, carpenters and electricians, according to Legate. Each of the crews has inspection protocols they have to follow, Legate said.

Each of the crews has a punch list of specifications that they check to make sure everything is as it should be, according to Legate. After each crew has been through the rooms, it is then handed over to the cleaning crews of L&L Janitorial.

"One of the challenges we face is we clean the units and prepare them for occupation, but once the students move in, it becomes challenging to meet the standards we have," Legate said.

Landers Watson, owner of L&L Janitorial, began cleaning the apartments as a sub-contractor for Sam Green, who owned the previous cleaning company. Watson started out cleaning the floors. When Green retired, took over cleaning the residence halls and apartments at SIUE.

"The reason they hire people like us is because they have no full-time cleaning employees," Watson said. "They would have to hire 35 full-time janitors to keep up."

Watson said parents are happy with the quality of the rooms when they move their children onto campus.

"When you don't get parents' complaints, you're doing a good job," Watson said. "This is one of the cleanest campuses around."



Sean Roberts/Alestle

Rickey Williamms, from L&L Janitorial cleans and strips a Cougar Village apartment Monday.

There are situations that come up when L&L Janitorial cleans the apartments. L&L had one apartment they had to fumigate and throw out all the furniture because the apartment was in such bad condition, but that does not happen often, according to Watson.

L&L Janitorial has their own process when they start to clean. When they get an apartment or residence hall space to clean, they break it down into three parts, according to Toni Bailey, a sub-contractor for L&L Janitorial.

Workers each take the kitchen, bathroom or living room to clean, according to Bailey.

"We start high and work low," Bailey said.

Bailey and her fellow workers clean light fixtures, above the doors, behind counters and under the beds. They take apart the kitchen appliances and degrease them, and even make sure the electrical box exteriors and fire extinguishers are sparkling, according to Bailey.

Legate and the L&L crews hope that students will feel compelled to keep up the standards of cleanliness that have been set for the rooms. 3,500 students live on campus and there were zero complaints in regard to cleanliness last year, according to Legate.

"We're not satisfied with doing a good job," Legate said. "We want a great job."

Rosie Githinji can be reached at rgithinji@alestlelive.com or 650-3527.

HEAT WAVE from pg. 1

will stay in the upper 80s for a while, which is normal."

According to the NWS, heat is one of the two biggest weather hazards that occur during summer months, the other being lightning. Heat is the number one cause of weather related fatalities, according to the U.S. National Hazard Statistics, and last week was Missouri Summer Weather Safety Week.

While St. Louis is where the majority of heat related fatalities occur in our area, the Illinois side of the river is not immune. On June 23, Catherine Smith of Glen Carbon died in her home due to excessive heat, according to the Madison County Coroner's Office. Her body temperature had risen to 106 degrees, even though she had several fans in operation at the time. Smith was 61 and had some medical problems that contributed to her susceptibility to the heat.

The NWS states that people with medical problems and the elderly are at the highest risk to the heat, but everyone needs to take precautions.

"Mainly use common sense," Carney said. "Stay indoors in the air conditioning if possible. Don't overexert yourself and be sure to take breaks or stay in the shade. Baseball caps or hats will also help keep you cool. Drink water and try to avoid alcohol or caffeine, because they can dehydrate the body. Sports drinks or fruit juice are also good drink alternatives."

Food Service employee Connie Becerra deals with the heat mainly by swimming in her pool.

"We have an above ground pool and had the grandbabies over this weekend, so we pretty much just stayed in it. I also stay in the air conditioning and keep bottled water around," Becerra said. "Actually, here (in the food service court), it gets a little chilly, so we keep sweaters handy."

Student Aaron Bury also had some tips for avoiding the heat.

"I try to stay inside and drink more water," Bury said. "When I do go outside I ignore it; that's the biggest thing really is trying to just ignore it."

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Fireworks go out with a bang

On Independence Day, the average college student will be hanging out with their friends or family, setting off a few fireworks or just generally having a good time. Well, not if the Illinois legislature has anything to do with it. Illinois really seems to be an anti-fun state.

Illinois law gradually started to criminalize fireworks, until present day where the most devastating fireworks one might buy are sparklers, or if they're feeling especially rebellious, snakes. University Housing policy even puts fireworks next to crossbows and firearms in the 'prohibited items' category.

I understand the reasons behind their decision to outlaw them. They do in fact cause some injuries, and if you don't use them safely you might very well lose an eye. The issue here is that the government is taking responsibility for people that should be responsible for themselves. We should not live in such a nanny state that the government

decides for me whether or not I am responsible enough to buy a bottle rocket. While you might look toward some of the negative examples of people who clearly can't control themselves with fireworks, the vast majority of people are capable of keeping the damage to others and their property to a minimum. For those few who aren't able to keep things under control, they should be responsible for any damage they cause to themselves or others.

Irresponsibility is not something limited to firework use. Plenty of people have issues with driving, doing it too fast or recklessly. Instead of vastly cutting down drive time for most drivers to compensate for a few bad apples, most governments punish primarily the bad apples. If you can't drive safely, you can't drive at all. The same should apply to fireworks. If you've shown irresponsibility with fireworks in the past, then you should not be able to use them anymore.

When the government puts an outright ban on most fireworks, even with good

intentions in mind, they inconvenience a large number of responsible citizens. While at first glance this inconvenience seems like it is worth it, for any dangerous activity there will be SOME people getting hurt. If we apply the policy that if some people get hurt because of this activity it should be illegal, we will have to make sure to outlaw sports, rough housing, jungle gyms, and cutlery.

Illinois legislatures should loosen up, chill out, and hang out with their other congressmen buddies on the 4th with some fireworks once in a while. Maybe then they will realize that they are just being too uptight on the matter. If they would prefer to stay in a padded room for the holidays I'm fine with that, but while they lock themselves up to protect themselves from the dangers of sparklers and bottle rockets I should be having fun blowing up stuff with my friends.

Sean Roberts is a junior computer management major from Port St. Lucie, Fla. He can be reached at sroberts@alestlelive.com or 650-3527.



Sean Roberts

Death of a Salesman, Angel, Pop Icon and more

The Kung-Fu Master, David Carradine.
The Ultimate Sidekick, Ed McMahon.
The Pin-up Girl, Farrah Fawcett.
The King of Pop, Michael Jackson.
The Bearded Pitchman, Billy Mays.
The deaths of all these people have shown the ebb and flow of the life of a celebrity.

Americans are fickle, and our news media shows it. After the initial break of a celebrity's death, most everything is put on hold. After last weekend's domino effect of celebrity deaths, Iran, Gov. Sanford's infidelity and now the long-forgotten Franken Senate race in Minnesota were pushed to the back burner.

At the same time a celebrity dies, their contributions to TV are aired non-stop. I love "Thriller" as much as the next person, but

when it frequents the same channel three times an hour, it gets a bit much. I did enjoy seeing "Kill Bill" though.

Maybe the greatest impact these people made with their deaths were in bank accounts. MJ may have left millions in unpaid debts, but I know of a few stores that sold out of "Bad" and other MJ albums. OxyClean probably isn't doing too badly either. The legendary poster of Fawcett will probably be marketed heavily again.

It's important to realize how hard it is to replace the nostalgia and talent each of these celebrities had. Vince Offer, another popular infomercial pitchman, pales in comparison and moral

standing (after beating up a hooker for biting his tounge.) Justin Timberlake is talented, but he's yet to reach MJ's "Thriller" level. Any talk show sidekick has yet to coin iconic phrases as McMahon has.

Sure, it's easy to say that a celebrity's death means as much as any other person's, but the next time someone tries to pose for a poster, sell a wonder cure for household problems, wield a Samurai sword, introduce your favorite talk show host or do the moonwalk, laugh.

Celebrity worship is probably ingrained in your psyche, and it makes an impact when icons die.

Kenneth Long is a junior mass communications major from Staunton. He can be reached at klong@alestlelive.com.



Kenneth Long

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Students prepare for Sculpture on Campus

by Rosie Githinji
Alestle Reporter

Junior art major Emily Dunlap of Waterloo is spending her third summer in a row working on a sculpture that will be displayed on the SIUE campus.

"I'm doing it for the competition, and also to build another large scale sculpture," Dunlap said.

Dunlap's sculpture won honorable mention at the Sculpture Walk last October. Her sculpture was a pairing of steel armature, which resembled interwoven seed pods, with honeysuckle. Dunlap said she made the sculpture as a reference to new life.

The sculpture is more ambiguous and an indirect representation, according to Dunlap.

"We spend our entire summers doing these," Dunlap said. "Working on the sculpture is ongoing, usually up until the fall. It's not something that is easily done."

Each artist receives a stipend to work on their pieces. Students who are selected write proposals and cover letters, make a budget and build a scaled model of their sculpture, according to Dunlap.

Many of the students have taken the sculpture class offered by the art department, but anyone is welcome to

turn in a proposal, according to Dunlap.

Graduate student Jennifer Flores of Baltimore, Md., received second place for her sculpture in last year's competition.

Flores said each student has a formula for what he or she plans on building. The original idea is explained in a proposal approximately five pages long. Scale models also help illustrate the project.

"I knew to make my sculpture, it was going to be 24 feet long," Flores said.

Students are selected by Thad Duhigg and one other instructor from the art department, according to Flores. The stipend money is split among the students. After the projects are finished, there is a "Sculpture on Campus" weekend and a guest juror is invited.

The sculpture Flores made for last year's competition is part of her overall art thesis. On one side of Flores' sculpture is a painting of a sunset over St. Louis. The other side featured a similar painting, but of the view from St. Louis.

"I make paintings on plywood," Flores said. "The sculpture showed how different people on different sides of the river see each other."

Flores completed her undergrad at Washington

University and said she had the impression East St. Louis was not as upscale as St. Louis and did not have as much to offer. After living in Illinois, she found many things she has come to appreciate, such as art.

"I like a lot of ambiguity in my work," Flores said. "I like to play with color and art."

Each year, 12 students are chosen to design and build sculptures that will be displayed outdoors throughout the campus, according to Sculpture on Campus supervisor Thad Duhigg. Duhigg said this year each student should receive a stipend of \$750 for the cost of materials.

Students will go on a Sculpture Walk in October with a guest juror who will give critiques and ask each student questions about their work.

Winners will receive monetary prizes for first, second and third places in the amount of \$1,000, \$500 and \$250 respectively, and awards are given after the Sculpture Walk, according to the Web site for the art department.

The public is invited to join the sculpture walk in October and also for refreshments afterward. For more information about the Sculpture on Campus, visit www.siu.edu/artsandsciences.

Rosie Githinji can be reached at rgithinji@alestlelive.com or 650-3531.

NOW RATING

PUBLIC ENEMIES

by Jeff Mason
A&E Editor

The summer is often a time full of fireballs and franchises. Every now and then, Hollywood likes to throw their audience a curveball and toss up a mid-season prestige pic. While that sounds all nice and well, director Michael Mann wouldn't want that, so he decided to make a flick full of gun fights, gangsters and gorgeous looking French gals. Unfortunately, the pieces to the puzzle just don't fit.

"Public Enemies" follows bank robber John Dillinger (Johnny Depp) in his quest to have whatever he wants, whenever he wants. Dillinger's mission is interrupted by FBI director J. Edgar Hoover and his newest protégé, Melvin Purvis (Christian Bale). Purvis is put in charge of the FBI's Chicago bureau, a hotbed of crime including Dillinger and Baby Face Nelson, and told to put a stop to the rampage.

The issues with "Public Enemies" start with the introduction of Depp's love interest, Billie Frechette (Academy Award winner Marion Cotillard). Dillinger's attraction to Billie starts as simply seeing a gorgeous gal in a red dress across the room, but eventually transfers to an idyllic fascination about where people are going instead of where they are coming from.

The problem is that there's really nothing else going on between the two in terms of chemistry. Billie hardly seems to be intimidated by Dillinger's criminal lifestyle, but also has no reason to follow Dillinger aside from a nice fur coat and the promise of a life much better than the one she has. This might work, but we never see her other life and Mann never gives her the chance to make us believe in this. Instead,

Billie just fawns over Dillinger for the rest of the movie for no apparent reason. It's as if Mann just threw the two together and said, "See, now you're a couple."

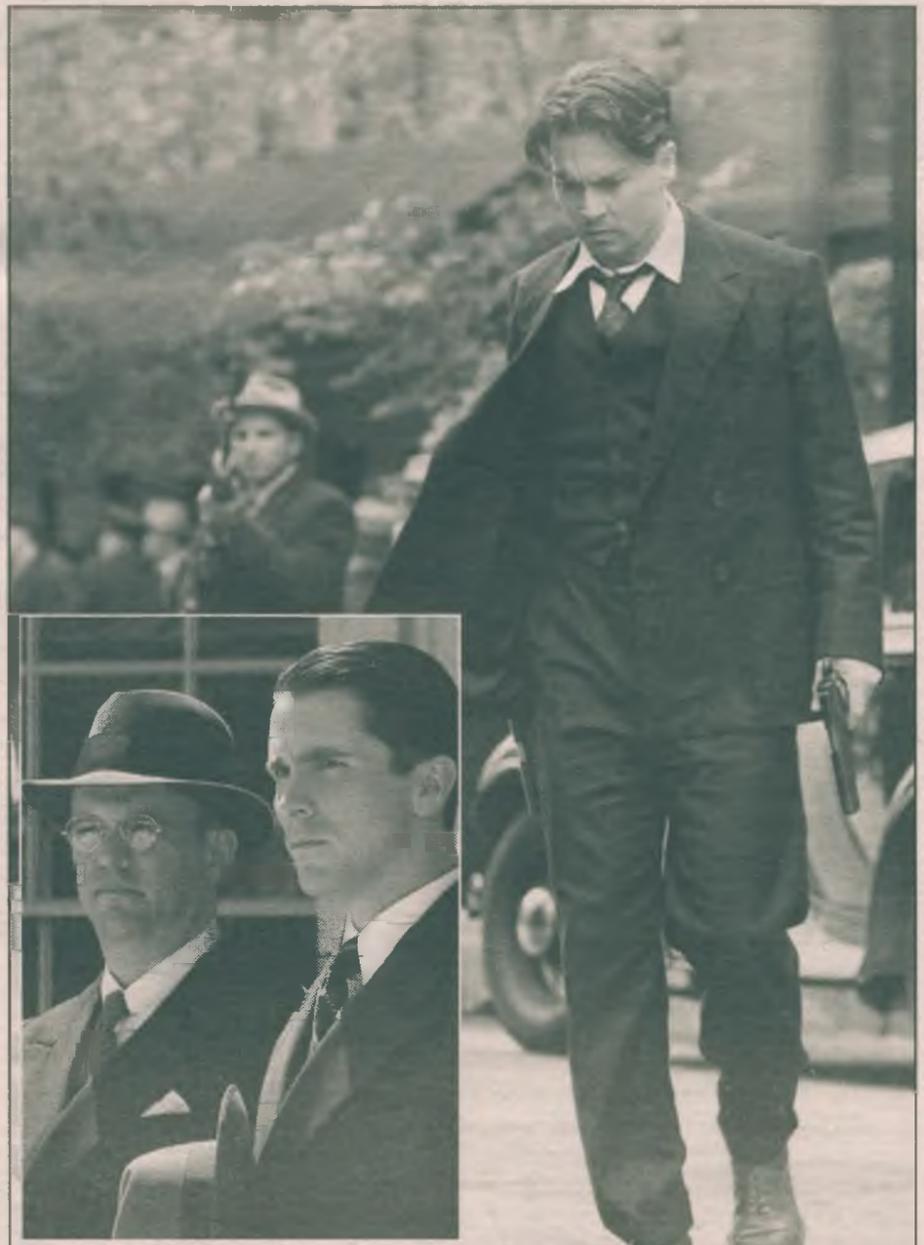
This goes on to hurt the story as well, since Billie is used as a plot device to lure Dillinger back to Chicago after his entire crew is whacked by Purvis' FBI squad. It's hard to buy Dillinger risking his freedom for a girl that he fell in love with for seemingly no reason. It's almost like he decided to fall in love instead of actually falling in love. This mess of a love story just feels forced and hurts the movie.

Not helping things is the movie's indecisiveness in genre. It seems split between being a character story following Dillinger or telling the story of the birth of the FBI through the destruction of the celebrity bank robber. Neither story line feels dominant and it creates a conflict, misguiding the movie as it goes along.

Depp, who would have easily been able to carry such a character drama, often feels stale, but his honey pie Billie feels the same way. Depp and Cotillard are both talented actors, so it's hard to believe that either one would have a mediocre performance. Instead, I have to believe Mann is to blame for the wooden feeling I get, even when the dialogue seems to be spot on.

Bale, once again, is typecast as the quiet, but diligent crime fighter. Despite getting about a third of the screen time as Depp, his character feels deeper and more relatable than Dillinger. His pursuit of Dillinger is frustrating and often results in FBI casualties, but his persistence easily becomes the most interesting part of the movie.

"Public Enemies" manages to be entertaining when it switches to its host of

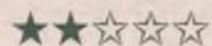


Photos courtesy of Universal Pictures.

gunfights, almost always involving both Depp and Bale. They aren't incredible, but have enough juice behind them to carry your interest for a while. It is also easy to lose track of who is who beyond the main actors. I went through almost the entire movie without knowing who Baby Face Nelson was.

Much like it must have seemed to track Dillinger in the early 1930s, "Public Enemies" seems to be everywhere at once. As hard as everyone in this movie tries, it

couldn't put the pieces together and make the movie how it probably should have been.



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Recruits look to build hoops, tradition

by Allan Lewis
Alestle Sports Editor

With a year of Division I play under their belts, the SIUE men's basketball team hopes to continue building towards future success with three new scholarship athletes.

LeShaun Murphy of Sachse, Texas, Anthony Mitchell of East St. Louis and Zeke Schneider of Metamora will be joining an SIUE team with holes to fill, after Brandon Dunson, Aaron Garriott and Barry Wellington transferred out of the program.

"The guys we have coming in will definitely fit into our program," Men's head basketball coach Lennox Forrester said. "I'm sorry to see those guys leave, but I am excited to see what these athletes can do for SIUE."

The newest Cougar, Murphy, is a 6-foot-1 inch guard and averaged 15.8 points and 4.7 rebounds in his final prep season at Sasche High School, where he played for three years after transferring from Saint Joseph's High School in Chicago.

Murphy said he had scholarship offers from Southern Methodist University and Stephen F. Austin on the table, and also received a look from Marquette University, but ultimately chose SIUE.

"I chose SIUE because I like the offense and the coaches," Murphy said. "Everyone is friendly and the coaches told me everything I needed to know."

Forrester said there were many qualities about Murphy's game making him attractive to the program.

"His athletic ability, dedication to the game, academics and his great basketball IQ attributed to our decision," Forrester said. "He is a tough kid who can play well, and those are the qualities we saw in him."

Murphy said Forrester made him feel wanted at SIUE, and had a positive influence on his decision.

"He told me everything and didn't leave anything out," Murphy said of Forrester. "He also talked to my parents, and they liked him, which is a plus."

Murphy is the first basketball player to emerge as a D-I athlete from Sachse High School under coach Dwight Williams.

Williams said Murphy is a dynamic talent on the floor, and will be able to make an impact in D-I.

"Explosive is probably the best word to describe LeShaun," Murphy said. "He has matured from the point he first started as a sophomore, and that is the type of talent coach Forrester saw in him."

The trio of recruits will join SIUE in their second season transitioning to D-I, and Murphy said he accepts the challenge.



Sean Roberts/Alestle

Freshmen forward Zeke Schneider averaged 15 points and 11 rebounds his senior season at Metamora HS.

"We have a lot to do before we can play in the tournament, but there is also more time to grow and mature as a team," Murphy said.

Forrester's 2009 recruiting class will be the first eligible to compete in the D-I NCAA tournament their senior seasons, as SIUE wraps up its transitional status in 2012.

Forrester said all of his new recruits are committed to helping SIUE build towards the future.

"We don't have postseason play right now, but these guys want to build a tradition and there is dedication and sacrifice in doing that," Forrester said.

Each new recruit, according to Forrester bring something different to the team.

"All three of them bring different pieces to the puzzle," Forrester said. "(Schneider) can play inside and out and play post defense, and they are definitely my style of players. True student athletes."

Schneider is a 6-foot-9 inch forward, and averaged a double-double with 15 points and 11 rebounds per contest at Metamora High School.

Schneider and Mitchell will be keys on the glass for SIUE, an aspect they struggled with last season.

"Any time you have problems rebounding the basketball you try and fix it," Forrester said. "They are definitely big pieces."

Mitchell was a second team All-Metro player for East St. Louis High School in 2007, where he averaged 14.7 points and 11 rebounds as a senior. Mitchell saw limited time under coach Rick Majerus with the Billikens in his first college season, seeing the court for an average of four



Sean Roberts/Alestle

Freshmen guard LeShaun Murphy practices with members of the SIUE basketball team in the Vadalabene Center. Murphy averaged 15.8 points and 4.7 rebounds his senior year at Sacshe HS (Texas)

minutes in eight games. He transferred to Highland Community College last season, but sat out as a requirement for transfer players.

Mitchell will be eligible to play for SIUE next season, and has three seasons of eligibility left.

With three key young players from last season not returning, Forrester said there is still an experienced group on the roster to help the progression of his recruits.

"It brings us back to having a younger team, but we also have some guys like Aamir (McCleary) Mark (Yelovich) and Stephen (Jones) who have been through it," Forrester said.

The new faces will see a challenging schedule in 2009-2010 including games against the University of Illinois, Purdue University and the University of Evansville on the road, while Illinois State University, Murray State University and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee will be making the trip to the Vadalabene Center.

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State champions Young, Hocum set to grapple for SIUE

by Allan Lewis
Alestle Sports Editor

Head wrestling coach David Ray looks at next season as a building block for a young team, and for his new class of recruits, nothing goes without sacrifice.

The Cougars have seven state champions joining the squad, in a rather large recruiting class, which will continue to grow with 25 walk-ons scheduled to try out.

Ray said the program is at the point of a total makeover, with just 12 athletes returning on a team expected to number in the 40s.

"We are underdogs, and in my mind the program is starting all over again," Ray said. "I am excited to see what we have, but won't have confirmation until we are in practice. We need a time to build this transformation, and I am excited about duels and this season. It is going to be competitive."

SIUE went 4-6 in team events last season, and will see four Big Ten conference opponents in 2009-2010.

Ray said he is not willing to predict how well his team will fare against a tough schedule next season, but he

said he hopes his athletes are committed to the long road ahead.

"All we can do is work hard, put in our time and stay committed," Ray said. "Dividends will pay out, maybe not this year or next, but the team will get to see its potential at the D-I level and we have to make that commitment."

"I look at the individuals we recruited and don't see any reason why they shouldn't be able to compete"

-David Ray,
wrestling coach

Helping out will be the Cougars newest additions, Jon Young of Kankakee and Gabe Hocum of Clarkston, Wash., both state champions in high school.

Ray sees Young wrestling in the 149-pound weight class, and as a threat to make the varsity squad. Hocum checks in at 174 pounds.

"With Jon, the possibilities are endless," Ray said. "He is a hard worker, ambitious and I am anxious to see how well he can perform. His energy and excitement is going to rub off on other young men, and he is very physical with a lot of talent."

Hocum is seen by Ray as a versatile wrestler, and is a finesse competitor for his size.

"He moves well and uses his legs well," Ray said. "He is a hard worker and D-I is where he wanted to compete."

Ray, who is adamant about wrestling and teaching the sport, said he hopes he can influence the lives of his young team to conform to a high level of dedication.

"I look at the individuals we recruited and don't see any reason why they shouldn't be able to compete as long as they are willing to make that sacrifice," Ray said. "You have to eliminate all outside distractions and focus on your goals. I don't expect it, but I hope that type of work ethic is what they conform to."

The Cougars open up their regular season schedule Nov. 14 at the University of Central Missouri open.

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