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Goodheart To Be Honored Saturday

Magnolia, Ark. - Steve Goodheart, who built the Southern Arkansas University baseball program into a national power, will be honored Saturday, May 1, at 11:30 a.m. at the Mulerider baseball field. Goodheart coached the 'Riders for 23 years before retiring last May. A short ceremony will be held prior to the Southern Arkansas-Christian Brothers Gulf South Conference West Division doubleheader in which Goodheart's jersey will be retired.

Goodheart finished his Southern Arkansas coaching career with the most wins in school history. His 'Riders won 764 games, lost 416, and tied five for a .647 percentage. His 764 wins place him second in collegiate coaches in the state of Arkansas behind the University of Arkansas' Norm DeBriyn, who retired two years ago with 1,161 wins in 33 years as head coach of the Razorbacks.

The 49-year old Goodheart played four years of baseball at SAU and was on two championship 'Rider teams in the now defunct Arkansas Intercollegiate Conference. He was an All-AIC selection in 1975 and played in the AIC All-Star games in both 1975 and 1976. As a student assistant in 1977, he once again helped SAU claim another AIC title. He was hired as a young head coach in 1980 by SAU's late athletic director, W. T. Watson.

Goodheart guided his 'Riders to nine AIC championships in 1983, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1994, and 1995. During that time, SAU won six district championships, two area titles, and played in three National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) World Series. His 1987 team finished third in the World Series and posted an impressive 46-7 record, SAU's best ever.

More than 50 of Goodheart's former players have signed to play professional baseball. He has coached 54 first-team All-AIC players, 26 first-team NAIA District 17 players, five NAIA All-Area players, 12 NAIA Southwest Region selections, 17 NAIA All-Americans, one NAIA Academic All-American, two Cliff Shaw Scholar-Athlete Award winners, 33 All-Gulf South Conference choices, 10 NCAA All-South Central Region selections, and two NCAA All-Americans.

Many of Goodheart's former players and assistant coaches are expected to attend Saturday's celebration. Among those in attendance will be Mike Godfrey, the coach that was hired, with Goodheart's blessing, to replace him.