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RU is batting an average of .240 at the start of the young season.

Over the weekend, the Radford Baseball team began their season by starting their 12-game road trip. They started with three straight road games at Samford University.

The Highs are looking to ride a record-breaking season into this year. Last year, the team set the school record for wins in a season with 31.

Radford returns eight players on the field and 11 players on the pitching mound from last year's 3rd place Big South squad. These returning players include five all-Big South selections from last year.

Junior right-handed pitcher Eddie Butler started in the season opener against Samford. Radford put up the first run of the game in the sixth inning off of redshirt junior infielder Jeff Kemp's RBI on a triple, scoring senior outfielder Matt Hillsinger from first base. Samford quickly bounced back in the bottom of the sixth inning by scoring two runs off

Butler. The sixth inning ended with Samford up 2-1.

In the eighth, however, the Highs managed to tie the game up. Hillsinger came up with the big RBI by driving in senior outfielder Zach Costello from third on a single up the middle.

Later in the eighth, Radford managed to load the bases with one out, providing a great opportunity to take the lead. However, Samford pitcher C.K. Irby retired senior infielder Matt Mack and junior first baseman Ryan Burgess to end Radford's offensive half of the inning.

The top of the eighth proved to be the deciding inning of the game. Samford's Zeth Stone scored the go-ahead run from third on a wild pitch. Kevin Putkonen then provided some insurance by scoring the second run of the inning on a single, putting Samford up 4-2.

The Highs failed to score a run in the ninth inning, and lost the season opener by a score of 4-2.

The team looked for a little redemption on Feb. 18, again at Samford. Jeff Kemp had a big game that included three doubles and two RBI.

The Highs put up the first run of the game in second inning when Costello scored off of senior Carl Travers' single. This run was the first of four for Costello in the game, as he got on base four times for four scores.

Samford bounced back and brought a 4-3 lead into the sixth inning. The Highs, however, came back by putting up the next four runs in the game.

Samford failed to score after the sixth inning, and Radford won the game by a score of 7-4. Senior right-handed pitcher Jake Palese received the win in the game when he came in in the fifth inning and put in three scoreless innings to help the win.

The Highs then looked to take the series in the deciding third match on Feb. 19. Radford had a very difficult last game at Samford.

Kemp accounted for each of the two Radford runs in the game, with one RBI and one run. On the series, Kemp went 7-for-13 with four RBI.

Despite Kemp's success, the team was unable to outscore Samford in the last game in the series. Samford managed to put up 12 runs in the game, beating Radford by a score of 12-2. The loss drops the team's record to 1-2 thus far, and 1-2 in the Big South conference. It also puts their Big South conference record at 1-2.

The Highs batted a collective .240 over the three games against Samford, while the Bulldogs hit .340 against the Radford starters and bullpen. Kemp and Turner lead the team in hits, with seven and four respectively. Kemp also hit five doubles over the first three games of the season.

The Highs are looking forward to bouncing back next week, when they will face off against their interstate rival, the Liberty University Flames on Feb. 22. Liberty is 4-0 at the start of their young season, as they easily disposed of both the Richmond Spiders and Towson University over three games by a combined score of 32-3. Radford and Liberty will play at 4

p.m. on Feb. 22.