Maddy Greeling helps guide SIUE women past Utah Valley to tourney championship game

by Eric Hess
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USAFA, Colo – **SIUE women's basketball** defeated Utah Valley 71-64 Friday and has earned a spot in the championship game of the Air Force Classic.

SIUE, 2-4, will face either Vanderbilt or host Air Force in Saturday's title game at 4:30 p.m. CT. Vanderbilt and Air Force face off later tonight.

The Cougars turned in their best shooting performance from the field in defeating the Wolverines of the Western Athletic Conference. SIUE shot 55.3 percent (26-47) from the field and an astounding 72.7 percent from three-point range (8-11).

"I was pleased with how well we shot the ball, said SIUE Head Coach Paula Buscher.

Utah Valley, 1-7, came back from being down six points at halftime and took the lead 39-38 with 4:26 to play on a three-pointer by Keana Delos Santo and advanced it to a three-point lead on a bucket by Sam Lubcke.

The Cougars answered in force with three straight three-pointers with one from Maddy Greeling, who scored a season-high nine points, and two treys from White. That put the Cougars up 47-41 with 2:37 left in the third period. SIUE wouldn't relinquish the lead from there.

"They made a push on us, and we shared the ball well I thought and got some big threes," said Buscher. "We certainly didn't take a lot of threes, but we made a lot of them."

SIUE's bench outscored Utah Valley's bench 28-8.

"Maddy gave us a spark, and Cloe Churchill got in and also gave us a spark," added Buscher.

Lauren White led the way for SIUE with 17 points, including hitting all three of her three-point attempts.

Donshel Beck finished with 14 points on 5-of-10 shooting from the field. Micah Jones collected 11 points and a team-high nine rebounds.

Taylor Gordon starred for the Wolverines with 16 points and seven rebounds. Utah Valley shot 41.1 percent (23-56) from the field. The Wolverines made the same number of three-pointers as the Cougars but took 25 for the game.