

SIUE Pink Zone games spotlights breast cancer awareness

by Madelaine Gerard, Staff Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – Every 19 seconds, somewhere in the world, a case of breast cancer is diagnosed in a woman.

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville and **Susan G. Komen of Missouri** joined together to fight the terrible disease in their 2017 Pink Zone campaign.

“Through SIUE women’s basketball and the Susan G. Komen of Missouri foundation, we are raising awareness and funds for breast cancer awareness,” **Toni Thomas**, chair of the **Pink Zone Committee**, said. “

The event, which featured a fan reception, and several fundraisers throughout the week, raffles, 50/50 drawings and more, led up to the Pink Zone Game. At noon on Saturday, the SIUE Cougars women’s basketball team faced off against Jacksonville State. Following this game, the men’s basketball team faced the Gamecocks in a match of their own.



“I love the support that the community shows for this event,” Thomas said. “It is so nice that women’s basketball helps us raise awareness for this important cause. We have not had this much local support ever. We’ve got help from the Health Educators department, administrators, staff and students joining together to help. It’s great for everyone to come together to do something like this.”

The Pink Zone Committee, SIUE Athletics and volunteers throughout the university worked together to produce a fantastic environment for those attending. Those wishing to donate to the fantastic cause were given numerous unique opportunities that could pay off with huge dividends in the form of the Coach’s Challenge, a free-throw challenge, basket raffles and t-shirt sales.

“Coach Paula Buscher and Coach John Harris have pledged \$25 dollars for each three-pointer made in each of the day’s games. We also have the free-throw challenge where you can pledge \$5 for every free-throw made in the women’s game,” she said.

Thirty-two baskets that were up for grabs in the event’s raffle were graciously donated by businesses around Edwardsville. Tickets were sold for \$1 each or \$20 for 30 tickets. This year’s special edition Pink Zone t-shirt was also for sale. Those wishing to

purchase could pick them up at the game or in the days' prior at the Morris University Center. Delectable cupcakes courtesy of The Cup in Edwardsville were also for sale, proceeds benefiting Susan G. Komen of Missouri.



The Pink Zone festivities served as a fantastic kick off for the women's basketball team's match at noon. Not only were breast cancer survivors and those who had been affected by cancer spotlighted in the event; they became part of the team. Survivors joined the women's basketball team on the court for their pregame rituals, stood ankle-to-ankle for the National Anthem, created the tunnel for the starting line-up and joined the team huddle. A survivor even presented the pink game ball at center court with both teams.

The Cougars battled hard throughout against their opponents in the nail-biting duel. A last-minute push by the home team guaranteed them their 69-62 victory against Jacksonville State.

Lauren White and Donshel Beck led the Cougars with 19 and 17 points respectively for the day. Micha Jones brought in 13 points as a consistent pillar of scoring during the game. Nakiah Bell helped the Cougars with assists.

The Cougars will travel to Southeast Missouri on Feb. 8. They will welcome UT Marin on the Feb. 11 and Austin Peay on Feb. 15 at the Vadalabene Center.



