

SIUE women snares redemption in win over Austin Peay

by Eric Hess

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EDWARDSVILLE - SIUE snared redemption Wednesday by posting a 76-69 victory over Austin Peay in a key [Ohio Valley Conference](#) women's basketball game at the Vadalabene Center.

The Cougars made amends for an 85-62 loss back on Jan. 11 at Austin Peay and earned a pivotal league win. SIUE improved to 11-16 overall and 7-7 in the OVC. Austin Peay dropped to 12-14 and 6-7.

"This game was a 'must win' for us," said SIUE's [Donshel Beck](#), who did her best to keep the Cougars churning. She scored a team-best 19 points and four more SIUE players tallied in double figures.

[Gwen Adams](#) supplied a spark off the bench by tossing in 15 points and sinking four free throws in the final 44 seconds to clinch the victory. [Nakiah Bell](#) and [Amri Wilder](#) both contributed 12 points and [Lauren White](#) had 10 points. Wilder also collected nine rebounds, and Bell registered four assists.

"The thing I like about this team is that we can all score," Adams said. "It was a tough game, but we all pulled through."

The Cougars remained in the hunt for an OVC tournament berth. Eight of the 12 conference squads will go on to the league tourney. SIUE plays Saturday at Murray State and then welcomes Eastern Illinois to the Vadalabene Center in its regular-season finale Feb. 25.

"I feel like every game in front of us is a 'must win' for us," SIUE Head Coach [Paula Buscher](#) said. "This game was a lot different from the first one because we played defense tonight. We also had a lot of different people score."

The Cougars also used a 12-0 spree in the second quarter to overcome a 10-point deficit and grab a 33-30 lead by halftime. They led by as much as 44-34 with 6:46 remaining in the third quarter before Austin Peay mounted a comeback.

The Governors closed to within 62-61 with four minutes left in the fourth quarter, but the Cougars wouldn't relinquish the lead. Beck contributed a three-point play and following an Austin Peay basket, and Bell, responded with a three-point basket. SIUE forged ahead 70-63 with 2:42 remaining and never looked back.

"I challenged the players at halftime because I thought we didn't play good defense the first four minutes of the game," Buscher said of the Governors' early advantage.

The Cougars got the message.

"We didn't do well in the first quarter, then we picked up our defense," Beck said.

Buscher noted, "Donshel gave us a lot of energy and some big plays. Gwen also had a huge game and really got us going."

Beck made 9 of 13 shots from the field. Adams, who is ranked No. 3 among Division I women's basketball players in free throw percentage, converted all nine of her free

throw attempts. The Cougars made 29 of 59 shots, including 2 of 6 from 3-point land. They sank 16 of 21 free throws and survived Tearra Banks' big night for the Governors. She scored 25 points and snagged 11 rebounds.

"Banks is tough to guard, but give credit to out post players. They kept battling and battling with her," Buscher said.

She added, "We have players who can score. Our biggest challenge is to play consistent defense."