

Alston has career-best, CM grad Troeckler tosses in 8 points in SIUE's tight loss to Stetson

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EDWARDSVILLE, Ill. – Stetson made the most of a second-half surge and defeated the SIUE Cougars 65-61 in a women's basketball game Sunday at the Vadalabene Center.

The Cougars, falling to 3-3, led 34-21 at half, but the Hatters came alive in the second half for their third consecutive victory. Stetson improved to 6-4.

"The way we started the game was good, but you also have to finish strong," SIUE Head Coach Paula Buscher said. "We had great help-side defense in the first half because our rotation was active. We played a great 20 minutes, but our defensive rotation seemed a little bit late in the second half. And Stetson played with a lot more energy in the second half."

The Hatters made 6 of 28 shots (21.4 percent) in the first half. They connected on 14 of 26 shots the rest of the way. Stetson scored the first five points of the second half and outscored the Cougars 19-8 in a six-minute stretch to knot things at 45-45 after three periods.

"They (Hatters) had great players, and it's hard to hold them down for 40 minutes," Buscher noted.

Jay'Nee Alston scored a career-best 14 points to spur the Cougars and teammate Gwen Adams contributed 12 points, all in the first half. Alston made 5 of 10 shots overall, including 4 of 9 from three-point range. She also had four rebounds and two assists.

Freshman Allie Troeckler, making her second start, pitched in eight points. Reserve Elina Berzina collected six points and six rebounds. Nakiah Bell recorded five assists and Sydney Bauman snared six rebounds.

"Our bench really stepped up," said Buscher, pointing to the 36 points from the SIUE reserves. "They had energy and gave us a lot of second-chance baskets."

McKenna Beach scored 16 points while Brittney Chambers punched in 15 points to go with 12 rebounds in leading Stetson. Kennedi Colclough had 13 points, including a key basket with 28 seconds remaining to give Stetson a 62-58 lead.

The Hatters extended their advantage to 63-58 moments later before SIUE's Alston countered with a three-pointer to slice Stetson's lead to 63-61 with 16 seconds to play. Kendall Lentz of the Hatters sank a free throw with 2.8 seconds left to round out the scoring.

SIUE made 21 of 60 shots, including 9 of 26 from three-point range. The Cougars hit on 10 of 17 free throws but were outrebounded 45-34.

The Cougars welcome Central Michigan of the Mid-American Conference at 7 p.m. Thursday and then play Sunday at Missouri.