

# EIU defeats SIUE in close women's volleyball match

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CHARLESTON – Despite finishing with exactly the same number of kills as Eastern Illinois, the SIUE volleyball team dropped its Ohio Valley Conference opener Wednesday night on the road.

The Panthers defeated SIUE in a tight match 25-22, 25-23, 25-23. Both teams had 40 kills for the match.

SIUE freshman outside hitter Ellen LeMasters matched her career high with a team-leading 12 kills and turned in a career-best .417 hitting percentage. Rachel McDonald added nine for the Cougars, which hit .174 as a team.

"Offensively we saw some good things and took some good swings," said SIUE Head Coach Kendall Paulus. "We just had a hard time getting into a rhythm. It was hard to gain momentum. We would go on a scoring run then we'd give up a run."

Eastern Illinois, 5-10 overall and 1-0 in the OVC, completed the match with a .239 hitting percentage. Laurel Bailey paced the Panthers with a game-high 13 kills while Kylie Michaels added 12.

"EIU did a nice job of keeping the ball inbounds with a balanced offense, and that can wear you down," said Paulus. "Overall, we worked hard and had some highlights."

SIUE, 1-12 overall and 0-1 in the OVC, next heads to Belmont for a 2 p.m. league contest Saturday.

"When you have room for growth," said Paulus, "there's room for opportunity so our focus now goes to Belmont."