

# SIUE uses innovative VXSport technology to measure performance

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EDWARDSVILLE - Southern Illinois University Edwardsville men's and women's soccer and basketball student-athletes are sporting new gear this season. Under their jerseys during games, and at practice and training sessions, a heart rate monitor and GPS tracker are calculating their every move for the betterment of their play and health.

The teams are using [VXSport technology](#) to measure performance and ensure the continual development of each player through data-specific training and competition play.

“Each athlete wears what is essentially a sports bra,” explained SIUE Director of Athletic Performance Mark Jamison. “Built into the lining of that is a heart rate monitor, and then there’s a specific unit in back which is the GPS. Those track distance covered at high-intensity speed, accelerations, decelerations, jump count, duration of heart rate high intensity, ground covered while at that heart rate and more.”

“Our goals are to make sure we’re putting our student-athletes at the best possible preparedness level, and that technically they’re ready to play every match or game,” he added. “This technology allows us to quantify the specific, physiological demands of their sport, so that we can progress training to meet those demands, as opposed to making assumptions of what those demands are.”

According to Jamison, the VXSport system and similar systems are commonly used in European play. In the U.S., the use of this technology is not as common in collegiate play. SIUE is one of two teams in its conferences to use the GPS units.

“This is just an example of what they’re doing at SIUE to get the best out of players and optimize our teams,” said men’s soccer midfielder Cliff Maina, a junior from Adelaide, Australia. “It’s about working smarter, not necessarily harder.”

Men’s Soccer Head Coach Mario Sanchez says his team’s success in the 2018 season aligns with the use of this technology.

“This has provided the opportunity to be quite specific with our training and in games,” Sanchez said. “We had one of our best seasons in the past few years, and we correlate that to the use of these units. If we unfortunately don’t get the right result in a game, the data collected allows us to reflect and see whether we covered the distance we needed.”

“Our players are 100 percent behind the use of VXSport,” he added. “They know it’s good for them and helps them perform at an ultimate level. We also experienced few muscle injuries this season, and that relates to the use of this technology.”

Women’s Soccer Head Coach Derek Burton believes using VXSport is about investing in SIUE student-athletes, including their overall performance and continual development.

“It’s a huge benefit to take away some of the guessing part of coaching that can be pretty prevalent as far as how hard or easy we should go, or what’s the most beneficial training plan for our athletes,” Burton said. “Using the data collected from these units, we can design more position specific recovery and post-game training.”

“I like that I can now see how much I’m putting into each game and how many miles we’re getting on our legs,” said women’s soccer midfielder Andrea Frerker, a sophomore from Maryville. “This is top-level technology. It was cool to receive such detailed feedback this season.”

The VXSport technology also incorporates important wellness questionnaires to gain feedback from the student-athletes that is shared with the coaches and SIUE Athletics’ sport psychologist.

“The buy-in from our student-athletes has been huge,” Jamison said. “From the athletic performance perspective, we want to make sure we’ve done as much as we can to take the preparation side of things out of their hands. When they step on the field, they can focus entirely on playing the game. With this technology, we can quantify that we’re doing that.”

[Southern Illinois University Edwardsville](#) provides students with a high quality, affordable education that prepares them for successful careers and lives of purpose to shape a changing world. Built on the foundation of a broad-based liberal education, and enhanced by hands-on research and real-world experiences, the academic preparation SIUE students receive equips them to thrive in the global marketplace and make our communities better places to live. Situated on 2,660 acres of beautiful woodland atop the bluffs overlooking the natural beauty of the Mississippi River’s rich bottomland and only a short drive from downtown St. Louis, the SIUE campus is home to a diverse student body of more than 13,000.