

SIUE Makes Men's Basketball Opener Successful 61-52 Over Quincy

by Joe Pott

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EDWARDSVILLE – SIUE made its men's basketball season opener a successful one Tuesday at the First Community Arena in the Vadalabene Center.

[Cam Williams](#) made certain of that. The Cougars' sophomore scored a team-best 17 points to guide SIUE past Quincy, 61-52. He tallied 11 of the Cougars' 27 points in the second half to provide first-year Head Coach Brian Barone with a memorable first victory.

"I'm proud of Cam with what he's done...beyond basketball," Barone said. "I love the way he communicates and the guys listen to him. "We believe in him and he can do it all."

The Cougars also used a stout defense to build a 16-point lead in the first half and they owned a 34-22 lead at the break. Quincy battled back in the second half and closed to within 52-50 with 4:27 remaining. Yet the Cougars outscored the Hawks 9-2 down the stretch, with Williams, a 6-foot, 2-inch sophomore from St. Louis, sinking four key free throws.

"We made our run in the first half because of our defense," Barone said. "We stuck to our game plan almost the entire first half. Our plan was to keep them out of the paint and we did that."

He noted, "In the second half, we didn't do that quite as effectively but at the end of the day we did what we needed to do."

Williams' highlight reel also included a four-point play to help the Cougars open a 34-18 advantage – their largest lead – late in the first half. He also contributed a steal and subsequent slam dunk with six minutes remaining to give SIUE a 52-45 lead.

So what did he enjoy the most?

"I was proud of my leadership and having us get the win," Williams said. "I want to keep our confidence up and bring my teammates together."

A stifling defense kept SIUE in control of things the first half. Quincy made only one shot in the first 10 minutes and just five – all 3-pointers—in the first 20 minutes. Overall, the Hawks made only 15 of 45 shots, or just 33 percent. They were 9-for-29 on 3-pointers.

[Mike Adewunmi](#) added to the Cougars' cause by contributing 11 points and seven rebounds. [Anselm Uzuegbunem](#) pitched in seven points and five rebounds. [Tyresse Williford](#) had five assists.

"Mike is who he is and what he did tonight is what he's capable of doing," Barone said. "He's very versatile."

The Cougars made 23 of 59 shots, including 5 of 16 from 3-point range. They also converted 10 of 15 free throws and outrebounded Quincy 38-34. The Hawks' Jonah Smith logged 18 points to lead all scorers. Smith connected on a pair of free throws to

get cut SIUE's lead to 52-50 before the Cougars took command of things in the final three minutes.

SIUE travels to Iowa on Friday for an 8 p.m. start in Iowa City, then they return home on Tuesday, Nov. 12 for a 7 p.m. date with Valparaiso of the Missouri Valley Conference.

"We're looking forward to playing at Iowa and it's going to be a huge game for us," Barone said. "We believe in ourselves."