

# **SIUE Men's Basketball Team Runs Away From Northern Illinois 73-53**

by Joe Pott

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DEKALB – SIUE raced out to a 16-4 lead Wednesday and never looked back, running away from Northern Illinois 73-53 at the Convocation Center.

After starting the season with back-to-back losses, the Cougars have won their last two straight. Wednesday win is the largest road win in SIUE's Division I era.

"I was really proud of how the guys came out and played with great effort," SIUE Head Coach Brian Barone said. "It felt like they were all over the court."

The Huskies (0-2) pulled within six at 16-10, before the Cougars stretched the lead again. An 11-2 run for SIUE made it 27-12 with 5:47 left in the half. [Sidney Wilson](#) buried a pair of free throws with 1:27 to play before half and SIUE carried a 16-point (34-18) lead into the break. It was the second consecutive game the Cougars have held their opponent to fewer than 20 points in the half.

"When we withstood their run, it was a nice sign that our messaging was absorbed and not just in the scouting report," Barone said.

Northern Illinois got as close as 13 points early in the second half before SIUE pulled away for good. A 19-2 run pushed SIUE's advantage to 30 (53-23) thanks to a [Desmond Polk](#) three-pointer with 14:47 to play.

"We played very free, but also with a great focus," Barone said. "We wanted to have a free attitude but a focused mindset. Shots went in and we started sharing the ball."

A [Shamar Wright](#) alley-oop dunk from [Courtney Carter](#) made it a 30-point game again at 60-30.

"There was a lot of time in huddles where the guys were talking about winning the next media," Barone said. "They kept their foot on the pedal."

[Sidney Wilson](#) led SIUE with a career-best 22 points on an efficient 8-for-14 shooting night. It was the third double-digit scoring effort of the season for the UConn transfer.

"Sidney was our latest addition this summer," Barone said. "When you have limited practice time it is hard to get to know one another. The guys are understanding how to play with one another and he is understanding how to play with them."

[Mike Adewunmi](#) also collected his third double-digit scoring game, scoring 15 points and adding 12 rebounds for his third career double-double.

SIUE racked up 18 assists, including seven from [Courtney Carter](#), who added six points and five steals.

"This was his best game with regards to controlling the game at point guard," Barone said of Carter. "He had five steals but he created several more."

SIUE finished with 10 steals as a team, marking the second time this season they have finished with at least 10.

The Cougars also flexed their muscle on defense, forcing 19 NIU turnovers and piling up 29 points off of those turnovers.

"We're have guys that are making that zone successful," Barone added. "There isn't a lot to it other than playing with great effort and activity. With our length, it has been good for us."

The Cougars added six more blocked shots after entering the game as the national leader in total blocks.

Tyler Cochran led NIU with 15 points. Darius Beane scored 13 and added six rebounds.

SIUE now returns home for the first time this season to face Omaha on Saturday. Tipoff is slated for 2 p.m.

"The guys are excited (to play at home)," Barone said. "We've been there, but the guys haven't gotten to go through a game situation in there."