

Belmont Opens 13-0 Run, Hands SIUE Men 114-62 Defeat In Nashville, Tenn.

by Joe Pott

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Belmont opened on a 13-0 run and never looked back, handing SIUE its first [Ohio Valley Conference](#) defeat, 114-62 Saturday at Curb Event Center.

"It was frustrating, because we came out on the first play and did a good job game-plan wise," SIUE Head Coach Brian Barone said. "We caused a turnover. The mentality at the start was good."

The Cougars fell to 2-1 in OVC play and 4-5 overall. Belmont is 10-0 in the OVC and 16-1 overall.

SIUE got as close as 13-5, before Belmont pushed the lead to double digits and never had less than a 10-point lead from that point forward. The Bruins had a 10-0 run and two other 9-0 runs in the first half.

"We didn't understand the speed at which they attacked and cut," Barone said. It wasn't as much that we didn't understand, it was more that we didn't react the right way.

"To their credit, they did it every single time for 40 minutes," Barone continued. "And we did not respond adequately at all."

Belmont led 56-22 at half, and continued to push the lead in the second half, ballooning the advantage to as many as 57. The Bruins connected on 61 percent of their shots, including 68 percent in the first half, and drained 17 of 31 (55 percent) three-point attempts. Belmont was 15-15 at the free throw line.

Luke Smith and Ben Sheppard each scored 18 points to lead the Bruins. Sheppard was 4-6 from three-point range.

"Some of the frustrating points were how we reacted to the difficult situations," Barone said. "And that is something we have to fix because we can fix that. We have to react better. We're going to learn."

The Cougars shot 42 percent from the field and were led by [Iziah James](#) in scoring. James scored a season-high 12 points on three triples and three free throws. [Shamar Wright](#) and [Sidney Wilson](#) each scored nine points. [Courtney Carter](#) scored eight points and added three assists.

"We're 2-1 in (in the OVC)," Barone said. "We came down here and we split on the road in Nashville. We did a little bit of what we wanted to do."

SIUE next plays on the road Tuesday at Eastern Illinois. Tipoff is 7 p.m.