

SIUE Notches First Sweep of Season, Closes Cougar Classic with Win over WIU

by Joe Pecoraro
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EDWARDSVILLE - In the final non-conference match of the season, SIUE struck early and never looked back, securing the first straight-set sweep of the season in a 3-0 victory over in-state foe Western Illinois on Saturday afternoon (25-16, 25-12, 25-21).

The opening set saw the Cougars trade blows with the Leathernecks in the early moments, before some outstanding attacking efforts firmly put the Red & White in front. As a team, the Cougars registered 18 kills, hitting at a season-best .455 clip (18-3-33) and siding out an impressive 81% (13-16). The SIUE defense also forced the Leathernecks into a hitting percentage of .161. This would be WIU's best percentage of

the match, as the Cougar defense continued to force errors in the second and third sets. The second set saw an even more dominant effort from the Cougars, never surrendering the lead at any point in the set. A number of lengthy scoring runs and a .357 hitting percentage (17-2-42) gave SIUE their largest set win of the season in a 25-12 decision. The third set was more tightly-contested, but the Cougar defense again led the way, holding WIU to a .026 clip (7-6-39) and a 40% sideout percentage en route to a 25-21 win.

Individually, the Cougars were led by [Julia Treichel](#), who recorded a season-high 16 kills in the three-set affair. Treichel also added seven digs and a solo block to her impressive statline. [Alyse Drifka](#) also had a career performance against the Leathernecks, hitting at an outstanding .875 clip (7-0-8) and recording a match-best 35 assists. Drifka also finished with nine digs, just missing out on a double-double. [Annie Ellis](#) continued to show why she is one of the most feared blockers in the nation, registering two solo blocks and a block assist. Ellis also recorded six kills. [Jenna Taphorn](#) demonstrated her formidable skill on the outside, recording season highs in kills (8), points (9.0), digs (3), and total blocks (2). [Sydney Hummert](#) also narrowly missed out on a double-double, registering seven kills and nine digs.

The Cougars close out non-conference play with a 3-8 record, and will remain at home next weekend to open Ohio Valley Conference play with a two-match series against Tennessee Tech. First serve against the Golden Eagles is scheduled for Friday, September 24 at 6 p.m., and the match will be streamed live on ESPN+. Tickets are available for purchase either online or at the door.

Quotes from Coach [Kendall Paulus](#)

On the match...

"We're just really proud of the way we came out. From the start, we played Cougar Volleyball. We talk about being balanced - making sure attacking and distribution is balanced, I thought we did that really well and I'm really proud of that."

On the team's defensive efforts...

"I loved our floor defense. I thought we were gritty from the go, and no ball hit the ground without bodies hitting the floor."

On [Alyse Drifka's](#) impressive attacking performance...

"We love when Alyse is aggressive and gets attempts on the board, let alone that many kills, so I'm really glad she took the chances she did."

On [*Julia Treichel's*](#) season-high 16 kills...

"For someone to have that many kills in a three-set match - we hadn't seen that yet until today, so she was on fire and I loved that we helped her sustain that."

All-Tournament Team

MVP: Bella Ravotto, Valparaiso

Gretchen Kuckkan, Valparaiso

[Sydney Hummert](#), SIUE

[Julia Treichel](#), SIUE