

Cougars Upended by Golden Eagles in OVC Opener, Fall Saturday Despite Tremendous Offensive Effort

by Joe Pecoraro
September 26 2021 10:55 AM



EDWARDSVILLE - SIUE volleyball dropped their Ohio Valley Conference opener on Friday night, falling in a 3-0 decision to the Tennessee Tech Golden Eagles.

The Cougars held the Golden Eagles to a .171 hitting percentage in the opening set, forcing TTU into eight attacking errors; however, SIUE could not overcome their own offensive woes, hitting a match-low .000 in the opening set and dropping the set, 25-21. The second frame saw the Cougars fall behind early, with TTU opening the set on a 8-0 run. Following a timeout, SIUE would storm back, recording a team-best 11 kills. The opening scoring run from the Golden Eagles would prove too much, as the Cougars fell 25-18 in the second. The third set was a back-and-forth affair throughout, with neither squad gaining the edge. Superb efforts from freshmen [Gabi Andrade](#) and [Ainsley Ranstead](#) kept the Cougars in the match, but their efforts would not be enough to overcome the Golden Eagles' front line and SIUE would narrowly drop the third set, 25-20.

As a team, SIUE notched a trio of service aces and nine total blocks. The Cougars also recorded 39 digs, narrowly edged by TTU's 43. Individually, SIUE was led by [Savannah Christian](#), who registered a team-high seven kills and hit at a .222 clip. [Annie Ellis](#) and [Julia Treichel](#) both recorded six kills, while [Alyse Drifka](#) once again led the Red & White with 19 assists.

Cougars Drop Second Match



EDWARDSVILLE - Despite strong individual performances, SIUE volleyball could not find the winning formula and dropped a 3-1 decision to the Tennessee Tech Golden Eagles on Saturday afternoon (21-25, 25-17, 21-25, 23-25).

The Cougars began the match with an impressive offensive outing, led by [Savannah Christian](#) and her five-kill first-set performance. Christian hit .714 in the set and helped SIUE side out a match-high 66% of the time. However, Tennessee Tech's attacking prowess would overwhelm the Cougars, as the Golden Eagles claimed the opening set, 25-21. SIUE, determined to avoid the mistakes of last night, relied on some stingy defensive work to secure a second set victory. The Cougars forced TTU into hitting -.067 in the second set, the lowest mark for either team in the match, which helped SIUE secure the 25-17 second set win. The Cougars dropped the third and fourth sets in heartbreaking fashion, building early leads before lengthy Golden Eagle scoring runs would prove too much to overcome.

"Tennessee Tech had a lot of fight, they're a really good team that really challenged us across the net," said SIUE Head Coach [Kendall Paulus](#) following the match. "We had to figure out how to defend a good right-side middle and left-side middle consistently, and I loved that we saw times where we could step up and do that."

As the team, the Cougars notched 13.0 total team blocks, two more than the Golden Eagles. SIUE also registered 47 kills, hitting at a .156 clip. Individually, the Red & White were led by [Jessica Vineyard](#), who becomes the first Cougar this season to hit at a clip of .500+ (minimum 10 kills). [Savannah Christian](#) also reached the double-digit kill milestone, while [Alyse Drifka](#) nearly notched her seventh double-double of the season (35 A, 8 D).

"We really just wanted to come out aggressive," added Paulus. "We hated how much we tipped yesterday, and I love that we went out swinging today."

The Cougars will play away from home next weekend, heading to Austin Peay State University for a two-match series in Clarksville. First serve is scheduled for Friday, October 1 at 6 p.m.