

Edwardsville Grad Ellis Registers 13 Kills: Volleyball Falls to Eastern Illinois

by Joe Pecoraro
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EDWARDSVILLE - SIUE volleyball started off strong, but could not hold off the visiting Eastern Illinois Panthers in a four-set loss on Tuesday evening.

The match started off with promise, as the Cougars claimed an opening set victory on the back of stout defensive efforts that saw SIUE hold the Panthers to a hitting percentage of just .077. The second set saw EIU find their footing, putting together a pair of lengthy scoring runs and holding the Cougars to a match-low 31 attacks en route to a 25-20 second set win. The EIU offensive onslaught continued in the third set, as the Panthers hit .455 and held SIUE to a clip of just .000 to claim the 25-10 third set win. The Cougars would enter the fourth set attempting to force the match into a decisive fifth set. EIU and SIUE would trade points back and forth, concluding with the longest set in the Kendall Paulus era with a 31-29 defeat.

The Cougars were led by Annie Ellis, who registered 11 kills and a .333 hitting percentage to continue her consistent run of form. True freshman Ainsley Ranstead followed close behind with nine kills of her own, while also adding five digs and a pair of blocks. Alyse Drifka again led SIUE in the assist department, recording 18 in the contest while also notching a pair of kills and six digs. Nicole Kijowski just narrowly beat out Grace Hurst on the digs leaderboard, as Kijowski registered 14 digs to Hurst's 13. Julia Treichel came just short of registering yet another double-double, putting together 10 digs and seven kills.

SIUE, which falls to 5-18 overall and 2-10 in OVC play, will embark on a four-match road swing starting with a Friday night fixture at reigning Ohio Valley Conference champions Morehead State. First serve from the Bluegrass State is scheduled for 6 p.m. CT.