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#2 Cougars Face #1 Skyhawks With OVC Title and NCAA Tournament Bid On The Line

by Joe Pecoraro

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#2 SIUE (10-6) vs. #1 UT Martin (11-5-1) | 2021 OVC Soccer Championship Final

Match Information

Date: Sunday, November 7, 2021

Location: Martin, Tenn.

Venue: Skyhawk Soccer Field

First Kick: 2 p.m., CT

All-Time Series: UTM leads SIUE, 9-8

Last Meeting: UTM 1, SIUE 0 | Oct. 10, 2021 | Edwardsville, Ill.

WHERE WE'RE AT: Through two weekends and seven matches of play, the co-regular season champions of the Ohio Valley Conference will play for the grandest prize the OVC has to offer - the OVC tournament crown. Standing in the way of the Cougars' second consecutive OVC title is the University of Tennessee at Martin, the number-one seed.

LAST TIME OUT: SIUE women's soccer put together one of its most complete performances of the season when it mattered most, as the Cougars claimed a 3-0 victory over the seventh-seeded Southeast Missouri Redhawks in Friday night's Ohio Valley Conference Championship semifinal fixture. The scoring got started in the seventh minute, when [Lydia Harris](#) buried a shot from just over 10 yards out to give the Cougars the early 1-0 lead. The scoreline would remain the same until the 57th minute when a foul inside the penalty box gave the Cougars their first penalty kick opportunity since the 2020-21 OVC Soccer Championship final last spring - also against Southeast Missouri. [Lily Schnieders](#) took the kick from the spot and powered it past the outstretched hands of the Redhawks keeper to double the SIUE lead. Just three minutes later, [MacKenzie Litzinger](#) would notch her league-best ninth goal of the season when she won a one-on-one battle with the SEMO keeper and neatly slotted the ball into the bottom right corner to give the Cougars the 3-0 lead.

SCOUTING THE SKYHAWKS: The Skyhawks enter Sunday's contest following a narrow 1-0 win over fifth-seeded Tennessee Tech. The Cougars and Skyhawks have met once already this season, when UTM claimed a 1-0 win over SIUE just under one month ago. Since that loss, the Cougars have won five of their last six matches.

LOCAL FLAIR: Coach Burton has recruited and retained talented student-athletes from throughout the Metro East and Greater St. Louis regions. Of the 33 student-athletes on this season's roster, 21 hail from Greater St. Louis - this includes five who came to SIUE from a county in the Metro East region.

RETURNERS: The Cougars return all but two starters from last season's OVC champion squad, and bring back all three goalkeepers from Spring 2021. Highlighting

the returning Cougars are OVC Forward of the Year [MacKenzie Litzsinger](#), All-OVC and United Soccer Coaches All-South Region Second Team selection [Lily Schnieders](#), and OVC All-Newcomer selection [Matea Diekema](#).

NEW FACES: The Red & White welcome eight newcomers to the program, six of whom hail from the Greater St. Louis area. Included in this class are sisters Ashlyn and [Kaitlyn Nichols](#) (O'Fallon, Mo.), who join Matea and [Myah Diekema](#) as the only known pair of sisters playing in the same Division I soccer program.

POSTSEASON ACCOLADES: A league-high four SIUE student-athletes made appearances on the First Team All-OVC squad this season - [MacKenzie Litzsinger](#), [Maria Haro](#), [Lily Schnieders](#), and [Andrea Frerker](#). Litzsinger and Frerker were individually honored as the best in their positions, winning OVC Forward of the Year and Midfielder of the Year honors, respectively. The Cougars also placed a pair of true freshmen on the OVC All-Newcomer team - [Grace Cobb](#) and [Kaitlyn Nichols](#).

SEASON 40: SIUE plays its 40th season of intercollegiate women's soccer in 2021. Hundreds of student-athletes have donned the Red & White on the pitch, helping the Cougars become the winningest Division I women's soccer program in the state of Illinois and leading SIUE to eight NCAA Tournament appearances.