



# **PREVIEW: SIUE Women's Basketball Opens Regular Season at Kansas**

by Eric Hess

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## GAME 1

SIUE Cougars (0-0, 0-0 OVC)

vs. Kansas Jayhawks (0-0, 0-0 Big 12)

Wed., Nov. 10, 7 p.m. CT

Lawrence, Kan. (Allen Fieldhouse)

Video: [ESPN+](#)

Radio: WSIE FM 88.7 the Sound (Randy Moehlman)

Audio: <http://streaming.siue.edu:8000/cougarsports>

Live Stats: [SIUEstats.com](#)

All-Time Series: Kansas leads 2-0

First Meeting: Dec. 19, 2010

Result: at Kansas 91 SIUE 52

Last Meeting: Nov. 13, 2013

Result: at Kansas 72 SIUE 56

Current Series Streak: Kansas W2

## OPENING TIP

- This is the first regular season contest for new Head Coach [Samantha Quigley Smith](#) at SIUE. She was the Great Lakes Valley Conference Coach of the Year last season at Lewis University.
- SIUE is 25-16 overall in season openers. The Cougars won last season at Purdue Fort Wayne 66-50.
- SIUE has its first four games on the road this season at Kansas, Memphis, Illinois and Butler.
- SIUE returns 13 players from last season's roster and has five newcomers for the 2021-22 season.
- Two newcomers are transfers. [Gabby Nikitinaite](#) played last season at George Washington. [Jaida Hampton](#) is a transfer from Wichita State.
- Three freshmen are on SIUE's roster. They are [Sofie Lowis](#) (Springfield, Illinois), [Taylor Goss](#) (Pekin, Illinois) and [Tyler Butler](#) (Belleville, Illinois).
- [Mikayla Kinnard](#) is the team's top returning scorer at 9.0 points per game.
- [Ajulu Thatha](#), who averaged 8.9 points per game and scored a team-best 222 points last season, took part in the 2021 Red Bull USA Basketball 3X Nationals. The tournament was held at the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame this past June.
- [Allie Troeckler](#) returns to SIUE women's basketball for her COVID senior season. She needs 115 points to become SIUE's latest 1,000-point scorer.
- [Mikia Keith](#) led the team last season in steals (31).
- Troeckler and [Madison Webb](#) tied for the team lead last season in blocks (17).
- With a new head coach comes a new coaching staff. Joining Coach Smith on the sidelines are assistant coaches [Jazmin Pitts](#) (SIUE alumnus), [Bradley Bruno](#) and [Ariel](#)

[Massengale](#). [Allazia Blockton](#) is the team's graduate assistant coach. [Angel Whetstone](#) is in her second season as the program's director of basketball operations.