

# Cougars Collect Double-Digit Road Triumph at Butler

by Eric Hess

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INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. – SIUE women's basketball turned up the offense Tuesday with an 87-74 victory at Butler.

SIUE Head Coach Samantha Quigley Smith said the 2-2 Cougars, which never trailed in the game, brought the fire against Bulldogs at legendary Hinkle Fieldhouse.

"We're still getting experience in having a lead, keeping a lead and extending our lead. We need a little more experience at that, but hopefully we'll get that in the next few weeks," said Smith. The Cougars open the home schedule Sunday with a 2 p.m. contest against Purdue Fort Wayne at First Community Arena.

Mikia Keith, a product of local Indianapolis' Pike High School, played in front of her family and led the Cougars with 17 points, including a season-best four three-pointers.

"What an awesome homecoming for Mikia Keith," said Smith. "Just to do it in front of family and friends is awesome."

Jaida Hampton scored all 16 of her points in the first half, more than doubling her top offensive effort of the season. Hampton hit three three-pointers for the Cougars.

"She (Hampton) gave us some great life today," said Smith. "Getting her going consistently I think we're going to be pretty dangerous."

Allie Troeckler pumped in 15 points, and Ajulu Thatha, who also played high school basketball in Indiana, joined the group in double figures with a bucket in the last 30 seconds of the game to finish with 10.

"Team basketball is so awesome," noted Smith. "Everybody gets a piece. Everybody shares the ball. We've been talking about that."

Both teams shot well from the field. SIUE hit a season-best 52.5 percent (32-61) from the field. Butler connected on 57.1 percent of its overall shots (28-49).

SIUE controlled the tempo from the start. The Cougars led by as many as 22 points (41-19) on a jumper by Bedford, Indiana, native Madison Webb in the second period with 7:02 left before halftime.

Butler, 0-5 to start the season, made scoring runs in the second and fourth periods led by 16 points from Zoe Jackson and 15 from Emilia Sexton, but turnovers and rebounds became an issue for the Bulldogs. Butler had 23 turnovers, which SIUE turned into 35 points. The Cougars also outrebounded Butler 35-20, pumping in 21 points on second-chance points.

"Even towards the end of the game you see people getting offensive rebounds," said Smith. "If you win the battle of the boards, you are in the game or you win the game."

SIUE had 15 steals for the game with five from Troeckler for the second straight game.

The Cougar bench played a big role in the win, accounting for 33 points.

"That's a really good team (Butler)," added Smith, who now has a win against a Big Ten team and a Big East team to start her SIUE coaching career. Butler is in a highly-competitive Big East Conference playing the likes of UConn, DePaul and Marquette.