

# Eastern nips SIUE in men's game at Charleston

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CHARLESTON, Ill. – [Donivine Stewart](#) and [Keaton Jackson](#) combined for 24 second-half points Saturday, but it wasn't enough. Eastern Illinois downed SIUE 57-54 in [Ohio Valley Conference](#) men's basketball at Lantz Arena.

SIUE dropped to 9-12 overall and 5-5 in the OVC. Eastern Illinois is now 13-9 and 7-3.

"Our guys fought pretty hard tonight but we came up short," SIUE Head Coach Lennox Forrester said. "We just couldn't get stops down the stretch."

Eastern Illinois raced out to an 11-0 lead before [Rozell Nunn](#) hit a pair of free throws to make it 11-2 14:56 before halftime.

"We dug ourselves a hole by getting down 11 and we fought back," Forrester said. "But we have to play better defense and get stops one-on-one."

[C.J. Carr](#) managed a steal and a running layup for SIUE's first field goal which came with 13:25 left in the half to make it 13-4.

It was 19-7 Eastern Illinois when SIUE ripped off the next 10 points to pull within two. [Kris Davis](#) and [Keenan Simmons](#) had five points each in the run.

The Panthers took a 26-19 lead into the locker room at halftime. Trae Anderson opened the second half with a short jumper to stretch EIU's lead to nine points just seconds into the second half.

Stewart followed Anderson's bucket with three consecutive three-pointers to tie the score (28-28) for the first time. The Cougars and Panthers would tie eight more times over the next nearly 18 minutes of play. Stewart tied the score at 30-30 with a pair of free throws at 16:02.

Stewart then came streaking down the lane to score a tip-in bucket with 14:01 left to give SIUE its first lead of the game at 32-30. The basket capped off a 13-2 run by SIUE with all 13 points coming from the junior guard. Stewart led SIUE with 19 points, 16 of which came in the second half.

For the next six minutes-plus, the Cougars either held the lead or the game was tied. LeTrell Viser gave EIU back the lead with a three-pointer to move EIU in front 45-42 with 7:55 to play.

The Panthers retained the lead until Carr knocked down a contested three-pointer from the left corner to move the Cougars ahead 54-52 with 42 seconds left.

Anderson got a layup to fall, drew a foul, and hit the free throw to put the Panthers back in front 55-54 with 26 seconds to play. Following a Cougar turnover and a foul, Cornell Johnston knocked down a pair of free throws with two seconds remaining for the final score.

Anderson led all scorers with 20 points for the Panthers. Johnston had 12 points.

"Anderson just kicked our butts," Forrester said. "We didn't have an answer for him and they kept going to him."

Jackson scored eight points for SIUE, all in the second half. He led all players with a career-high 15 rebounds.

The Cougars finished the game with 17 turnovers, including 11 in the first 20 minutes.

"Turnovers killed us in the first half and not getting stops in the second half hurt us a lot," Forrester added.

SIUE is off until traveling to UT Martin for a 6 p.m. contest Saturday.

"We have to continue to get better," Forrester said. "There are games left to be played."