

# SIUE Men's Basketball Set for Season Opener Monday

by Joe Pott

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Game 1

SIUE Cougars (11-21, 5-13 OVC in 2021-22)

vs. Harris-Stowe Hornets (0-3, 0-0 AMC)

Monday, Nov. 7, 7:00 p.m.

First Community Arena (4,000), Edwardsville, Illinois

### ON EXHIBITION

SIUE showed a versatile offense and a stout defense Wednesday, overwhelming Eureka in exhibition play. SIUE combined to shoot 60 percent (42-70) overall and 42 percent (10-24) from three-point range. [Jalen Hodge](#) scored 18 points to lead five players in double figures. [Damarco Minor](#) (14), [Jonathan Kurtas](#) (13), [Dorion Staples](#) (11) and [Lamar Wright](#) (11) each also scored in double figures for the Cougars.

### OPENING ACT

SIUE begins its 55th season of men's basketball Monday. The Cougars are 24-30 in season openers.

### DOUBLE DIGIT WINS

With 11 wins in 2021-22, SIUE had its second-most wins in a season at the Division I level. SIUE won at least 10 games for the first time since the 2018-19 season and the sixth time since moving to Division I.

### TAYLOR'S RETURN

Guard [Ray'Sean Taylor](#) returned to game action against Eureka for the first time since tearing his right anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) in the second half of SIUE's game at Southeast Missouri last Jan. 29. Taylor previously sat out the 2020-21 season with the same injury, which he sustained in August 2020. Taylor is a preseason All-Ohio Valley Conference selection.

### TAYLOR'S SEASON

Taylor scored in double figures in 19 of 21 games in which he played. He led SIUE in scoring 14 times and scored 20 or more points in a game nine times. Taylor was the leading scorer among first-year players in the country at 17.6 points per game. Taylor won the OVC Freshman of the Week award five times during the season. He was a finalist for the Macy Award for National Freshman of the Year.

### PRUITT PROVED IT

Sophomore [DeeJuan Pruitt](#) also was chosen to the preseason All-OVC team. Last year, Pruitt led the Cougars in rebounding at 6.8 rebounds per game, which was fourth in the OVC. Pruitt turned in two of the top 10 single-game rebounding performances in the OVC last year with 16 at Tennessee Tech (1/20), to tie SIUE's Division I single game record as well as 15 at Eastern Illinois (1/13). He was third on the team in scoring at 10.2 points per game, good for 21st in the league.