

Cougars Advance at OVC Women's Basketball Tournament

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. - [Tierny Austin](#) scored a game-high 23 points, including a three-point play that put SIUE women's basketball ahead for good, in a 72-69 quarterfinal victory over Austin Peay at the [Ohio Valley Conference](#) Tournament.

With the win, the second-seeded Cougars will take on the victor of Thursday's quarterfinal game between No. 3 seed Tennessee State and No. 6 seed Morehead State. SIUE's semifinal game is scheduled for Friday at 2 p.m.

SIUE set another Division I era record with its 19th victory of the season, and that victory was hard fought to say the least.

The Cougars erased its third double-digit deficit of the season. After falling 6-0 in the first 38 seconds of the game on a pair of three-pointers by Austin Peay's Kristen Stainback, who led the Lady Govs with 17 points, the Cougars had to battle from behind.

"Austin Peay is a really good basketball team," said SIUE Head Coach Paula Buscher. "Playing a team three times, it's tough to step up and get that big win. I give them a lot of credit, but I am proud of our team coming through in the end, especially on the boards."

The Lady Govs, 10-20, played confident in the first half, shooting 48.4 percent from the field. SIUE, however, didn't let the early Austin Peay lead get out of hand. By the halftime buzzer, the game was tied 37-37. Austin and [Gwen Adams](#) each had nine points in the opening 20 minutes.

The two teams were tied six times and exchanged the lead seven times overall. The second half became even more of a nail biter than the first half.

"I thought the difference in the game was our rebounding in the second half," said Buscher.

SIUE, which entered the OVC Tournament as the top team in rebound margin, was outrebounded 20-17 in the first half. By game's end, a 28-13 second-half advantage on the boards lifted the Cougar defense.

"We like to believe that we are a pretty good defensive team," said Buscher. "We like to think that we have one heck of a defender in Tierny Austin, and I thought she did a great job late in the game trying not to give great touches to (Tiasha) Gray because she is such a tremendous player.

[Donschel Beck](#) and Butts joined Austin in double digits. Beck scored 14 in her first OVC Tournament action while Butts added 10.

SIUE, which led by as many as six points, took a 67-62 lead on a free throw by [Shrona Butts](#) with 2:53 left to play. Austin Peay tied the game with a layup by Brianne Alexander and a three-pointer by Gray, who finished with 16 points.

Austin Peay then took the lead 69-67 on a pair of free throws by Gray with 1:08 to play.

SIUE would score the final five points of the game on a three-point play by Austin and two free throws from Butts.

"We just wanted to be aggressive and attack the basket," said Austin. "We went hard and were aggressive so that effort to carry over to the defensive end."

With Austin Peay down by three, the Lady Gavs were fouled with three seconds left. Jennifer Nwokocha missed both free throws, but the ensuing rebound ended up in the hands of Alexander who missed a potential game-tying three-pointer from the corner as the buzzer closed out the game.