

# Cougars Edged by Xavier on Sunday Afternoon

by Owen Hetherington  
November 28 2022 3:55 PM



EDWARDSVILLE – The Cougars entered the locker room with their first lead of the season ahead 38-30 at half but couldn't hold on as Xavier bested the Cougars 73-65 on Sunday afternoon at First Community Arena.

SIUE dropped to 0-5 on its 2022-23 campaign while Xavier improved to 6-1.

"I'm proud of our group, especially how we started the game," Head Coach [Samantha Quigley Smith](#) said. "This was a different Cougars women's basketball team we've been looking for."

The Cougars led by as much as 11 in the first half, shooting 43 percent from the floor and outrebounded Xavier 24-17. Xavier found its footing in the third quarter and shot 56 percent (9-for-16), taking a five-point advantage after the quarter. The Musketeers held its lead for the remainder of the contest.

"In the first half we came out with a lot of energy and intensity," said [Sofie Lowis](#). "We didn't come out with the same energy in the second half, but I think we are beginning to play a better brand of basketball overall."

Lowis led the Cougars with 17 points in the game and shot 7-of-16. She also grabbed six rebounds, good for a career high.

"She brought aggressiveness, scoring, and confidence in her game," said Smith. "Being a guard that is 5-8 and grabbing six rebounds in a game against bigger players speaks volumes about her heart, will, and competitiveness."

SIUE collected a season-high 40 rebounds, led by [Ajulu Thatha](#) who recorded a career-high 14. She also added 16 points for a double-double, the fourth of her career and the first by a Cougar this season.

"Her ability to rebound the basketball changed the game for us," said Smith.

The Cougars also limited their turnovers to 16 after averaging 26.8 through the first four games.

"We've been trying to instill our program's mindset from day one," said Smith. "But these last few days, there has been an attention to detail from our student-athletes in practice."

[KK Rodriguez](#) led SIUE with four assists. The Cougars finished with a season-best 13 total assists.

"We did a great job of executing today," said Smith. "We drew something up in a timeout and made it happen. Our passing ability was so different. It was more precise, detailed, and focused. Kudos to our guard play for getting the ball where it needed to."

Xavier had four players with points in double figures, led by Mackayla Scarlett with 21.

SIUE will travel to Ames, Iowa to take on Iowa State at the Hilton Coliseum. First tip is slated for 6:30 p.m.

"Our schedule has been getting us ready for what's going to come," said Smith. "Having a game like this heading into our upcoming schedule is really important."