

SIUE Surges to Sixth Straight Win; Welcomes Bradley Tuesday

by Joe Pott

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EDWARDSVILLE – SIUE men's basketball ran its winning streak to six Saturday, downing Troy 78-72 at First Community Arena.

SIUE improved to 7-2. The six-game winning streak is the longest for SIUE since the 2005-06 season. The seven nonconference wins also are a program high since SIUE joined the Ohio Valley Conference.

The Cougars will welcome Bradley to Edwardsville Tuesday night.

"This was one heck of a win," Head Coach [Brian Barone](#) said. "Troy is a very well-coached team. It was like a chess match at times. We had to adjust in our press attack and defense throughout the game. Our team responded accordingly for a victory."

Following the opening basket from Troy, SIUE ripped off the next nine points to lead 9-2 and they never trailed in the game again. The Cougars connected on 56 percent (14-25) of their shots in the first half and pushed the lead to as many as 12 following a three-pointer from [Ray'Sean Taylor](#) with 7:39 left before halftime.

"It was one heck of a college basketball game," Barone added. "These are the type of games you want your team to be a part of."

Troy made a push at the start of the second half, forcing a pair of early turnovers before cutting the Cougars' lead to three. A three-pointer from [Shamar Wright](#) gave SIUE a 54-46 advantage when Troy reeled off eight straight points to tie the score following a three-point by the Trojans' Kieffer Punter.

A pair of free throws by Taylor gave SIUE a 65-58 lead with 6:39 to play, but Troy again made a push and got back within one at 65-64 at the five-minute mark, but that is as close as it would come.

For the game, SIUE knocked down 25-52 shots (48 percent) and drained 9-21 three-pointers. The nine threes are the second most in a game this year for the Cougars.

Taylor collected his first 20-point scoring effort of the year, and the 10th of his career with a game-high 21 points. He hit a pair of three-pointers and was 9-12 at the free throw line. He also led SIUE with eight rebounds.

"I felt loose when I went out there today and played the right way," said Taylor. "It's not all about points on the board, but it's about playing hard and being myself. I just woke up today with a good feeling, and we got the win."

[Damarco Minor](#) scored 17 points and was 7-13 from the field. He added four assists and three steals.

"I just try to play in the moment and do whatever I can for the team," said Minor. "Whether it's getting on the floor for a loose ball or grabbing a rebound. It's not all about scoring. Whatever I can do to help contribute towards a win, I'll do."

[Lamar Wright](#) added three three-pointers and 14 points and [Shamar Wright](#) scored 13 points.

SIUE, which began the game among the top 35 in the NCAA in turnovers forced, forced 17 from Troy and turned them into 25 points.

Four Trojans scored in double figures led by Aamer Muhammad's 13 points. Punter added 11 points.

Tuesday's 7p.m. game in Edwardsville marks Bradley's first visit to SIUE.

"We have expectations for ourselves, and we want to live up to our own standards," said Barone. "We have Bradley coming in who's very well-coached, physical, and strong defensively. We're going to get back to work tomorrow and have a game plan in place for Tuesday."

Tuesday night's game is a 'red out' and SIUE fans are encouraged to wear red.

"We want as many fans as possible coming out here for our Red Out against Bradley," added Barone. "This is an unbelievable community and university to play in front of. We're going to continue working hard to make them proud."