

Pruitt, Minor Lead SIUE Past Tennessee State, Cougars Now 11-5

by Joe Pott

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EDWARDSVILLE – SIUE men's basketball opened on a 9-0 run Thursday and never trailed on its way to an 81-72 win over Tennessee State at First Community Arena.

[Damarco Minor](#) and [DeeJuan Pruitt](#) both recorded doubles to lead SIUE to an 11-5 overall record. The Cougars improved to 2-1 in Ohio Valley Conference play. The 11 wins are the most in a season under Head Coach [Brian Barone](#), whose team also won 11 games last season.

"We had a very business-like approach to the start of the game," Barone said.

Minor led the Cougars with 18 points, while grabbing a career-high 10 rebounds. Pruitt scored 16 points and hauled in a season-high 13 rebounds. It is the second time this year that Minor and Pruitt have picked up double-doubles in the same game.

[Lamar Wright](#) score 13 points and [Shamar Wright](#) scored 10 points. [Shamar Wright](#) moved to 20th in career scoring at SIUE with 921 career points. [Ray'Sean Taylor](#) and [Terrance Thompson](#) each scored nine points.

"They never waiver on the support for one another," Barone added of his team. "When there is someone out there supporting you from the bench or next to you then you can just play your game."

Tennessee State got as close as two in the first half at 25-23, but SIUE scored 11 of the next 12 points to lead 36-24 with 5:43 left before half. The Cougars led 40-34 at the break.

Like the first half, the second half saw SIUE push its lead to 12 following a three-pointer from [Jalen Hodge](#) with 9:48 left. The Tigers again cut the lead to two using a 7-0 run which began with just under six minutes to play. Tennessee State had the chance to tie or take the lead but an offensive foul turned the ball back to SIUE and [Lamar Wright](#) put SIUE up four and TSU never got any closer.

The Cougars sealed the win by knocking down 13 of 14 free throw attempts in the game's final 90 seconds. For the game, SIUE knocked down 30 of 41 free throws. The 41 attempts were the most for Cougars since December 2018. The 30 free throws made matched a season high.

"They got it to 66-64 and we didn't crack," Barone said. "We got some stops we needed to get, and we made free throws. Defensive stops and defensive rebounds were huge for us."

SIUE outrebounded Tennessee State 45-34, hauling in the second-most rebounds in a game this season.

Tennessee State was led by Jr. Clay and Mark Fitzgerald who scored 22 and 21 points, respectively. Dedric Boyd added 15 points and Adong Makuoi scored 11.

"That's a top-tier team in our league," said Barone of Tennessee State. "They are very well-coached and have a lot of talent. To control the game on the scoreboard from start to finish is a very good accomplishment for us."

SIUE goes back on the road to face Southern Indiana in Evansville, Indiana Saturday.
Game time is slated for 7:30 p.m.