

14th Triumph Of Season: Cougars Down Lions for Fourth Straight Win

by Joe Pott

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EDWARDSVILLE – SIUE and Lindenwood met for the first time as Ohio Valley Conference opponents, Saturday, with the Cougars coming away with a 68-58 win in front of 1,839 at First Community Arena. SIUE was won four straight and seven of its last eight games.

"First off, how about that crowd and this community; that's really cool," SIUE Head Coach [Brian Barone](#) said. "They had tailgaters out there for basketball. Seeing those smiling faces is something that is really exciting."

The Cougars improved to 14-5 overall, extending the program high for wins at the Division I level. SIUE moved to 5-1 in OVC play to maintain a one-game lead in the league.

The Cougars never trailed in the game, but also never put the game out of reach.

"We made the shots we need to make and made the passes we needed to make," Barone added. "They were cutting hard and we couldn't pull away from them. Our guys were resilient in making the right adjustments and making the right plays when we needed to."

SIUE ran out to a 13-5 lead following a [Terrance Thompson](#) layup with 13:23 to go in the half before Lindenwood got back to within two at 15-13.

An 11-2 run gave the Cougars their largest lead in the first half (26-15) following a [Lamar Wright](#) three-pointer with 5:03 to play before the break. The Lions got back within six at halftime.

After the Lions got within three early in the second half, SIUE used a 15-4 advantage to push its lead to 14 after a baseline dunk from [DeeJuan Pruitt](#) with 14:35 left.

Lindenwood trimmed the lead to six points on several more occasions. It was 64-58 after a pair of free throws from Kevin Caldwell with 47 seconds left. [Ray'Sean Taylor](#) and [Damarco Minor](#) each hit a pair of free throws down the stretch to seal the win.

Taylor led all scorers with 18 points. Minor scored 16 points and added nine rebounds.

"It's a very player-driven team," Barone said. "We compete with one another and we're really starting to listen to one another."

Taylor had a game-high five assists as well.

"They take pressure off of me," Taylor said of his teammates. "I like to see them do well. It's fun to play with players that go out there and score as well."

Minor was 6-7 at the free throw line as well.

"That's something I take pride (doing what it takes to help the team win)," Minor said. "We have some of the best scorers in the country on this team. I just do what I do. I have faith in my team that we're going to get the win.

[Shamar Wright](#) scored 11 points and [DeeJuan Pruitt](#) scored five to go along with a game-high 13 rebounds for the second straight game.

SIUE shot 46 percent (23-50) for the game. Lindenwood (7-12, 2-4) connected on 36 percent (21-59) of its shots. The Lions were led by Keenon Cole and Brandon Trimble who each scored 12 points.

SIUE remains home to face Morehead State Thursday night at First Community Arena.