

Thatha Sets SIUE Single-Game Rebounding Record with 25 In Win Over Lindenwood

by Owen Hetherington
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ST CHARLES, Mo. – Senior [Ajulu Thatha](#) set the SIUE women's basketball single-game rebounding record with 25 and the Cougars shot 44 percent (23-52) in the contest to run past Lindenwood on Thursday afternoon at Hyland Arena.



"I'm really excited and proud of our group for their performance today," Head Coach [Samantha Quigley Smith](#) said. "Lindenwood is a good basketball team, who has been playing solid as of late. They had a big win against UT Martin the other day, so we knew they were going to come out with a lot of energy and fire."

SIUE improves to 7-17 on the season and 6-7 in Ohio Valley Conference play. Lindenwood falls to 2-19 and 1-12.

The Cougars used a nine-point scoring run midway through the first quarter to lead 18-11. SIUE shot 54 percent (7-13) from the field and 2-3 from deep while holding the Lions to just 26 percent (5-19) in the opening quarter.

The Lions regrouped in the second to put pressure on the Cougars, beginning the quarter on 5-0 run. Silvey silenced the Lions' momentum by draining a three pointer at the 7:16 mark, jolting the SIUE offense to maintain its lead entering halftime.

"We had some non-disciplined possessions in the first half," added Smith. "But we completely changed in the second half. We did a great job on the glass and a lot of that credit goes to Ajulu."

Entering the break, the Cougars took a five-point lead, at 27-23. SIUE concluded the first half shooting 40 percent (10-25) and 4-7 from three.

SIUE would take the opening four points of the third quarter, pushing its lead eight before Lindenwood used a 6-0 run to bring the game to within two points at 31-29 with five minutes to go. SIUE's offense regrouped, knocking down 47 percent (7-15) of its shots in the quarter to take an eight-point lead at 44-36 to end the third.

Both teams remained scoreless through the first three minutes of the fourth until [Olivia Clayton](#) found the basket in the paint off an assist from [Mikayla Kinnard](#). Lindenwood quickly answered back the following possession before Thatha was fouled, sending her to the line. She went 1-2 before [KK Rodriguez](#) forced a steal, allowing Thatha to score a layup in the paint on the offensive possession.

Leading 51-43 with 3:46 to go, Thatha went 2-2 on a pair of free throws pushing SIUE's lead to 10. Lindenwood would score a bucket before Thatha went 2-2 at the line again for a 55-45 advantage. The Lions grabbed the following three points before SIUE took the next six on layups from Thatha and Kinnard. Kinnard was fouled the following possession and went 2-2 at the line, bringing SIUE's lead to 61-48.

Thatha grabbed her 24th rebound of the contest on the defensive end with 52 seconds remaining, securing the most by a Cougar in program history. She picked up her 25th

rebound on the offensive end 38 seconds later. Her 25 single-game rebounds mark the second most in Division I this season.

"She's grown so much as a player," said Smith. "She's made so many strides when it comes to her individual play on the offensive and defensive ends of the court. She takes her time and is patient when finishing at the rim. She values defense and rebounding. Grabbing 25 rebounds isn't easy. I'm so proud of her and she deserves this accomplishment."

Thatha scored SIUE's final three points on a layup and pair of free throws, bringing her total to 29. She finished the contest 10-13 from the field and 9-12 at the free throw line. She added three assists and one steal.

SIUE outrebounded Lindenwood 44-30 in the game and scored 14 off second chance opportunities.

Silvey added 12 points for SIUE, scoring all her points from beyond the arc. She added two assists and one steal. [Sofie Lowis](#) contributed seven points, three rebounds, three assists, and two steals.

"She came into this game with the mindset that we play our best when we're playing freely and having fun," said Smith. "Macy did that in our primary break. She took advantage of her open looks and knocked them down. Her offense translated to solid defense."

Lindenwood's scoring was led by Emily Benzschawel's 14 points.

SIUE will host Eastern Illinois on Saturday at First Community Arena. Tipoff is scheduled for 1:00 p.m.