

Women's Basketball Inks Camara, Smith, Williams, and Wooldridge for 2023-24 Season

by Eric Hess
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EDWARDSVILLE – SIUE women's basketball has signed four transfers for the 2023-24 season. Madina Camara (Maputo, Mozambique), Halle Smith (Belle, Missouri), Lezhauria Williams (Springfield, Illinois), and Brianna Wooldridge (Schaumburg, Illinois) will join the Cougars this upcoming season, announced Head Coach [Samantha Quigley Smith](#).

Camara, a 5-8 guard, comes to Edwardsville from New Mexico Junior College. She made the starting lineup in all 32 of the Thunderbird's games as a sophomore, averaging

8.1 points. She finished in double figures in 13 contests and finished the season with a 41.4 (99-239) shooting percentage. Her 80 total assists, averaging 2.5 per game, ranked second on the team. She also collected 105 rebounds and 54 steals.

"Mady brings great athleticism and a will to win," said Smith. "Her defensive focus and love for the game will be contagious and a great addition to our program."

Smith, a 6-0 forward, transfers to SIUE from Southeast Missouri where she made 15 starts for the Redhawks during the 2022-23 season as a sophomore. She averaged 4.5 points, 2.9 rebounds, while shooting .450 (49-109) for SEMO last season. She also led Southeast Missouri State with 19 blocks, averaging 0.6 per game. Against Kansas last season, she tied a career high in scoring with 18 points. As a freshman during the 2021-22 season, Smith was named the OVC Freshman of the Week on Dec. 7 after notching 35 points (11.7 ppg) and 15 rebounds (5.0 rpg) over three games while shooting 69 percent from the field.

"Halle is a versatile power forward with a familiarity in the Ohio Valley Conference," said Smith. "Not only does she come from a great local family, but her ability to finish and play with a toughness with her back to the basket will aid in our balance to score underneath."

Williams, a 5-8 guard, joins the Cougars from Rend Lake Junior College where she made starts in all 25 games for the Warriors. The sophomore led Rend Lake in scoring at 15.7, shooting percentage (48.8), assists per game (3.4), and steals per game (2.2). On Feb. 15, she scored a season-high 32 points, going 14-16 from the field and 4-4 at the free throw line.

"Zar brings a junior college experience with her to our SIUE Cougar program," said Smith. "Her defensive intensity is something we love adding. Not only that, but her ability to break people down off the dribble is another great aspect of her game. Zar is another local woman, whose family we cannot wait to see in the stands to cheer her on."

Wooldridge, a 6-1 forward, transfers to SIUE from IUPUI where she appeared in 16 games, playing 3.7 minutes per game while averaging 0.6 points and 0.6 rebounds as a freshman. She shot 50 percent from the field and dished out two assists in her rookie campaign. On Jan. 14, she scored four points while collecting a career-high six rebounds and one assist against Robert Morris.

"Bri is another Midwest addition, and we cannot wait for her to arrive," said Smith. "Her skill set includes facing up from the mid post and taking defenders off the dribble. She also has an athleticism and strength that will be a great addition to our program. Bri's competitiveness is another aspect we cannot wait to add."

Camara, Smith, Williams, and Wooldridge join Emiyah Cobb (Clarksville, Tennessee), Ava Gugliuzza (New Lenox, Illinois), Taylor Farris (Oxford, Ohio) and Ava Stoller (St. Petersburg, Florida) in Smith's 2023 recruiting class.