

SIUE Women's Volleyball Team Set For 2023 Season

by Owen Hetherington
August 20 2023 7:37 AM



EDWARDSVILLE – SIUE women's volleyball will have a new look in 2023, featuring seven new players as head coach [Kendall Paulus](#) graduated three student-athletes from the squad that went 13-17 and 8-10 in the Ohio Valley Conference a year ago. The Cougars return 11 players from last year, including two sophomores, nine juniors, one senior, and two graduate students.

Key Returners

[Sydney Hummert](#) (Quincy, Illinois) returns to the Cougars for her fourth season and will look to anchor the Cougars' offense. Hummert was named to the conference's preseason All-OVC team on Wednesday, following her sophomore campaign where she led SIUE on the attack with 318 kills, averaging 2.72 kills per set, good for 10th in the league.

Redshirt senior [Savannah Christian](#) (Washington, Missouri) returns as the most experienced player on the Cougars' roster this season, entering her sixth year with the team. Last season, the outside hitter led SIUE with a .242 attack percentage while her 263 kills ranked second.

Junior [Priscilla Jones](#) (Austin, Texas) made her presence known at the net during her first season with SIUE, leading the team with 99 total blocks. The middle blocker racked up 226 kills last season, good for third on the team.

Outside hitter, [Julia Treichel](#) (Brookfield, Wisconsin), concluded her 2022 season with 215 kills, 20 service aces, 200 digs, and 34 total blocks. Her 2.01 kills per set ranked fourth on last year's team while her total digs were tied for fourth.

At center court, setter [Alyse Drifka](#) (Richfield, Wisconsin) recorded 421 assists last season, averaging 4.09 per set, good for second on SIUE. She added 18 aces from the service line while contributing 200 digs on defense.

Junior outside hitter, [Ainsley Ranstead](#) (Mahomet, Illinois), enters her third season with SIUE following a 2022 season where she collected 214 kills on the attack. Her 2.04 kills per set stacked up third on the Cougars last season.

[Bree Schreimann](#) (Wentzville, Missouri), Gabe Andrade (Oswego Illinois), [Grace Beekman](#) (Emden, Illinois), [Jenna Taphorn](#) (Pekin, Illinois), and [Paige Montgomery](#) (Waterloo, Illinois) also return for SIUE.

Adding Experience

Paulus bolstered her 2023 roster with three transfer student-athletes who bring previous collegiate playing experience to the team: [Chelsey Abel](#) (Dacula, Georgia), [Corinna Jones](#) (Bloomington, Illinois), and [Elana Fuller](#) (Greenville, North Carolina).

Abel comes to Edwardsville from Kennesaw State where she saw action in 54 sets across 23 matches over three seasons. The middle blocker registered 31 kills, averaging 1.15 per set, as a senior. She contributed a season-best seven kills on three occasions while tallying 21 total blocks during the 2022 season.

Jones collected 1,279 assists and 495 digs across three seasons at VCU. The setter saw action in 26 matches while averaging 4.01 assists and 1.55 digs per set. She led the Rams with 23 service aces, including three matches with three each. Jones recorded 20-plus assists in seven matches, including a 49-assist outing vs. George Washington.

Rounding out the transfers is middle blocker [Elana Fuller](#), who appeared in 44 sets across 20 matches with Fayetteville State last season. She registered 58 kills on 140 total attacks for a .193 hitting percentage while ranking fifth on the squad with 20 total blocks.

Fresh Faces

Four freshmen join the Cougars this season: [Abi Banitt](#) (Prescott, Wisconsin), [Cydney Anderson](#) (Bolingbrook, Illinois), [Elise Paul](#) (Arnold, Missouri), and [Megan DePoorter](#) (Coal Valley, Illinois).

Banitt comes to SIUE from River Falls High School where she helped the Wildcats to a 36-6 record as a senior. The setter led the Wildcats with the highest passing percentage and digs in her final season.

Anderson served as the captain of Bolingbrook High school and played varsity volleyball for three seasons. As a senior, the outside hitter helped lead the Raiders to a 32-5 record while being named to the 2022-23 All American Watch List.

Paul, a middle blocker, registered 683 kills with a .330 attack percentage, 269 blocks, 328 digs, and 82 aces over 295 sets at Lutheran High School. She was named the All-Conference Player of the Year while earning All-District First Team honors as a senior.

DePoorter played four years of varsity volleyball at Moline High School, leading her team to a 26-10 record as a senior. In her final season where she served as captain, DePoorter was honored with Western Big 6 Conference MVP, Quad City Metro Area Illinois Player of the Year, and Champaign-News Gazette First Team All-State. She also won the USAV 17U American Division National Championship with Iowa Select Volleyball Club in 2022.

Nonconference Slate

The Cougars will compete in four preseason tournaments, featuring 12 contests, before beginning the OVC schedule on Sep. 23. SIUE will travel to the Bradley CEFCU Invitational and UIC Invitational before hosting the Cougar Classic. The Cougars will play their first preseason tournament at First Community Arena since the 2021 season,

featuring contests against Idaho, Milwaukee, and Bradley. SIUE concludes the nonconference swing at the Purdue Fort Wayne Invitational.

Last Season

The Cougars returned to the OVC Tournament last season for the first time since 2019 as the eight seed, falling to top-seeded UT Martin in the first round. SIUE finished the season 13-17 overall and 8-10 in league play.

SIUE's digs per set (14.99), aces per set (1.32), attacks per set (36.06), and total kills (1,435) all ranked top five in the conference last season.

Up Next

Paulus's 2023 roster begins its season with an exhibition meeting at Illinois State on Saturday, Aug. 19 at 6:00 p.m. SIUE's nonconference schedule will begin Friday, Aug. 25 at the CEFCU Invitational against Eastern Michigan.