

# High Hopes For 2023-2024: Three Men's Basketball Cougars Land on Preseason All-OVC Team

by Joe Pott

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EVANSVILLE, Ind. – SIUE guards [Ray'Sean Taylor](#) (Collinsville, Illinois), [Damarco Minor](#) (Chicago) and [Shamar Wright](#) (Memphis, Tennessee) have been named to the 12-member preseason All-Ohio Valley Conference men's basketball team announced Tuesday at the league's annual media day.

"The recognition of Shamar, Damarco and Ray'Sean is greatly appreciated," SIUE Head Coach [Brian Barone](#) said. "They are three players that have contributed in this league over the past several years. They have earned this honor from their production."

In addition, the Cougars were picked second in the preseason poll, the highest SIUE has ever been picked in the poll.

"We know preseason rankings are not final," Barone added. "It is a credit to the players' willingness to stay together over the last several years to continue to help our programs' upward growth."

Taylor, an All-District and First Team All-OVC pick following last season, returns for his third season at SIUE. He led the Cougars in scoring at 15.5 points per game to rank sixth in the OVC. His production increased to 17.1 points per game in league play. Taylor turned in nine 20-point games, and recorded his first 30-point game in January at Tennessee Tech. He also led the team in total assists (96) and assists per game (3.0). He was fourth in the league in free throw shooting, knocking down 82 percent of his shots.

Minor, an OVC All-Newcomer selection last season, was second on the team in scoring at 14.3 points per game, good for 12<sup>th</sup> best in the OVC. Minor capped his season with a 32-point outburst against UT Martin in the OVC Championship. It was the ninth-highest scoring game in the league last year. Minor was second in the OVC in free throw shooting connecting 88 percent of his shots from the line. He established a new OVC record when he knocked down 47 consecutive free throws early in the season.

Wright, who surpassed the 1,000-career point plateau in February, will play in his fifth season with the Cougars and begins the year tied as the SIUE's all-time leader in games played at 122. Wright finished the year fourth on the team in scoring at 10.6 points per game and was second on the team with a .477 shooting percentage. He tied for fifth in the OVC at 1.5 steals per game.

Three selections to the preseason team also marked the most SIUE has had.

SIUE is coming off its best season at the Division I level, winning 19 games and advancing to the second round of the OVC tournament. The Cougars earned 162 points to finished behind Morehead State in the preseason poll. The Eagles garnered 20 of the 22 first-place votes and had 200 points in the poll. Tennessee State collected the other two first-place votes and were picked third with 153 points. UT Martin and defending tournament champion Southeast Missouri rounded out the top five.

"It's an honor to be recognized with the highest preseason ranking in our school history," Barone said. "It's a testament to the people involved in our program that people believe in what we are doing. I have often said that belief is a powerful tool."

The Cougars will play host to East-West University Oct. 29 in a 7p.m. exhibition First Community Arena. The regular season for the Cougars begins Nov. 6 at Dayton.

Season tickets and mini plans for SIUE Basketball are on-sale now. All ticket information is available at [SIUECougars.com/feature/tickets](http://SIUECougars.com/feature/tickets). For ticket inquiries, please contact Associate AD/Sales and Partnerships Jake Sutter at 618-650-2872 or by email at [jaksutt@siue.edu](mailto:jaksutt@siue.edu).