

Rodriguez Selected to Preseason All-OVC Team, Cougars Tabbed to Finish Seventh in OVC

by Owen Hetherington
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EVANSVILLE, Ind. – Graduate guard [KK Rodriguez](#) has earned Preseason All-Ohio Valley Conference honors and SIUE women's basketball has been picked to finish seventh in the league. The announcements were made at the league's media day on Tuesday. Voting was conducted by the conference's head coaches and sport information personnel.

Rodriguez is one of 13 student-athletes around the conference to be honored on the Preseason All-OVC team. She ranked fourth on the Cougars' 2022-23 squad averaging 8.1 points per game while leading SIUE in total assists (73) and steals (50) during her first season in Edwardsville. Her steals per game (1.9) ranked fifth in the OVC while her assists per game (2.8) were good for 10th.

"She brings a lot to the table, not only as a student-athlete, but as a leader on our team," Head Coach [Samantha Quigley Smith](#) said. "She puts her body on the line and is a great influence for the rest of our roster. You want veteran players on a team that will lead by example, and that's exactly the type of player KK is."

The St. Louis, Missouri, native appeared in 26 games last season while making starts on 25 occasions. She was named the OVC Newcomer of the Week on Dec. 27 after averaging 12.5 points and 4.0 assists over two games at the Husky Classic.

The preseason poll, also released on Tuesday at the conference's media day, has Tennessee Tech selected as regular season champions. The Golden Eagles picked up 196 total points and 16 first-place votes. Little Rock (2nd, five first-place votes) and Eastern Illinois (3rd, one first-place vote) also received first-place votes. UT Martin (4th), Southeast Missouri (5th), Southern Indiana (6th), SIUE (7th), and Tennessee State (8th) rounded out the top eight.

SIUE returned to the OVC tournament last season, marking the eighth time the Cougars had made the postseason in the Division I era. SIUE picked up a win against No. 7 Tennessee State in the opening round of the conference tournament before falling to the No. 3 Tennessee Tech in the league quarterfinals. SIUE concluded last season 9-22 overall and 7-11 in OVC play.

This season, the Cougars return five student-athletes while welcoming four transfers and three freshmen. SIUE will open its new season in an exhibition contest on Thursday, Nov. 2, welcoming Maryville to First Community Arena followed by a nonconference slate featuring 13 games.

"We're a very balanced team with a lot of impact players," added Smith. "We have some young players on our team that are ready to make an immediate impact. We return five student-athletes that played substantial minutes last season and have experience in this league. We have some exciting talent on our roster, and I cannot wait to get the season underway."

Season tickets and mini plans for SIUE Basketball are on-sale now. All ticket information is available at 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.

"When you have a year like we did last year, we're certainly excited to get back on the court," said Smith. "We have a good mix of returners and young players who are motivated to make an impact in this league."