

Four Cougars Finish in Double-Figures, Women's Basketball Falls Short Against Eastern Kentucky Thursday

by Owen Hetherington
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EDWARDSVILLE, Ill. – [Halle Smith](#) and [KK Rodriguez](#) led SIUE with 14 points apiece, but SIUE fell short at the buzzer against Eastern Kentucky on Thursday night at First Community Arena.

SIUE falls to 0-2 on its 2023-24 campaign while ECU improves to 2-0.

"I'm proud of the way we fought tonight," Head Coach [Samantha Quigley Smith](#) said. "To bounce back after a tough game at Oklahoma State shows the resilience this team has."

Despite trailing by 12 in the opening quarter, SIUE's offense fought back to minimize EKU's lead to just six at the conclusion of the first. With just over a minute remaining in the first half, the Cougars tied the game twice before entering the locker room down two.

SIUE took its first lead of the contest two minutes into the second half at 35-32 and led by as many as eight in the third quarter.

Trailing by three with just over a second remaining in the contest, [Sofie Lewis](#) grabbed her own offensive rebound on her own missed three-point opportunity and converted an and-one to knot the contest at 72. However, the Colonels took a timeout and executed a last shot opportunity to down SIUE, 74-72.

"EKU was building a couple of years ago," said Smith. "They had an 18-win season last year. That's where we ultimately want to be. All around, they responded well to things and went on some great runs. It's a learning experience for us. We know we can execute better down the stretch."

SIUE shot 44 percent (24-55) in the contest and 39 percent (7-18) from long range. At the free throw line, the Cougars were nearly perfect, going 17-19. SIUE picked up 35 rebounds while dishing out 17 assists.

"We shared the ball well," added Smith. "So much of our success came on the defensive end of the court. We did a great job of grabbing the rebound."

Four players finished in double figures, led by Smith and Rodriguez's 14 points. [Ava Stoller](#) and [Macy Silvey](#) added 12 points. Silvey finished 4-6 from beyond three-point territory.

Rodriguez and Silvey led SIUE with five boards each while Smith, Lewis, and [Olivia Clayton](#) contributed four. Rodriguez's five assists also led the Cougars.

SIUE celebrated Military Appreciation Night at First Community, honoring the brave men and women who fight for our freedom by wearing camo jerseys. The jerseys will be presented to active and former military personnel.

"It's an amazing initiative to be apart of," said Smith. "There's a lot going on the world that's bigger than basketball. A lot of brave men and women fight for the opportunities

we have in this country. They keep us safe and sacrifice their lives so we can have the opportunities we have. There's no way to thank them for the sacrifices they make."

SIUE returns to action on Sunday, Nov. 12 against Evansville. Tipoff is scheduled for 1:00 p.m. and will be streamed on ESPN+.

"Evansville is a great Missouri Valley program," said Smith. "We have to come ready to play. We take each game one at a time, but now we're onto shifting our focus towards Evansville."

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