

Three Cougars Score in Double-Figures, SIUE Drops Road Contest at Michigan

by Owen Hetherington

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ANN ARBOR, Mich. – [Molly Sheehan](#), [Sofie Lewis](#), and [KK Rodriguez](#) each scored in double-figures, but Michigan overpowered the Cougars, 103-59, on Wednesday night at the Crisler Center.

SIUE falls to 1-7 in its 2023 nonconference slate. Michigan improves to 6-1.

The Cougars and Wolverines went toe-to-toe through the first five minutes and 20 seconds of the first quarter, knotted at 12 before a media timeout. Following the break,

Michigan used a 20-3 run over the next eight minutes and 10 seconds to run away with the contest.

"That's what really good teams will do to you," Head Coach [Samantha Quigley Smith](#) said. "I thought we battled. All around, Michigan is just a very strong program."

Michigan's leading scorer, Laila Phelia, who entered the game averaging 17.3 points per contest, was held to just four points by the Cougars' defense. Michigan also averaged 17.3 offensive rebounds per game entering the contest, but SIUE held the Wolverines to 13 on the offensive glass.

"That was a goal of ours, for sure," added Smith. "We locked in on Laila for sure, but Michigan's bench play was very solid in this one. They shot the lights out. One thing I think that's important for us to focus on is when our opponents take things away, we have to adjust."

Michigan concluded the contest 57 percent (39-69) from the floor while holding the Cougars to 31 percent (18-58) overall. The Wolverines outrebounded SIUE, 50-27 while forcing 19 turnovers. The Cougars forced 16 turnovers, 10 of which came in the first half, but Michigan scored 23 points off its turnovers compared to SIUE's four.

"We have to capitalize when we take advantage of a turnover," said Smith. "When you force a turnover, your running game becomes challenging when a team like Michigan has what they have in terms of speed, length, and athleticism."

SIUE converted on six of its 17 three-point opportunities while Michigan went 14-25 from deep. The Cougars concluded the contest 17-25 at the free throw line.

Sheehan turned in a season high in scoring, co-leading SIUE with 14 off the bench. She was 5-7 overall, 3-4 from beyond the arc, and 1-1 at the stripe.

"She was really under control and did a great job of taking her time when she attacked the rim," said Smith. "She did a nice job of slowing the game down in her minutes of play."

Lewis added 14 points, her third game finishing in double-figures this season. The junior shot 3-7 from the floor and 2-6 from deep. She also converted six of her eight attempts at the line while grabbing four rebounds. Rodriguez scored 12 points in 23 minutes of play. She was 4-11 overall, 1-3 from three-point land, and 6-8 at the stripe.

Freshman [Ava Stoller](#) scored seven points while grabbing four boards. [Halle Smith](#) also collected four rebounds, three of which came on the offensive end. [Lezhauria Williams](#) added three rebounds while leading the Cougars with three assists.

Coach Sam also took the opportunity to thank supporters who donated on Giving Tuesday to women's basketball. To learn how you can support the program, click [here](#).

"I want to thank everybody that gave to support our program," said Smith. "We are currently going through a locker room renovation and have some exciting projects planned. Our Director of Athletics, Andrew Gavin, is making SIUE a special place. In the near future, it's going to get bigger and bigger. SIUE men's and women's basketball is going to be the place to be in Edwardsville, and we couldn't do it without your support."

SIUE returns to First Community Arena on Sunday, Dec. 3 against Northern Illinois. Tipoff is scheduled for 1:00 p.m.

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