

Letterhead for SIUE Athletics

FEATURE

Contact: Jonathan G. Brown

Email: jonabro@siue.edu

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SIUE Cougars on the rise: A New Era for Basketball Success

EDWARDSVILLE, IL. (March 30, 2025)- The Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE) men's basketball team makes waves in Ohio Valley Conference (OVC), proving that determination is the key to success. With a season filled with intense matchups, comeback victories, and a growing fan base, the Cougars are solidifying their reputation as a rising powerhouse in collegiate basketball.

“We’ve been building toward this moment,” said SIUE head coach Brian Barone. “The commitment from our players, staff, and the SIUE community has been incredible. We’re not just competing; we’re making a statement.”

A major contributor to the team's recent success is a senior guard Ray 'Sean Taylor, whose leadership and scoring ability have been much needed. Taylor, a two-time All-OVC selection, has consistently delivered clutch performances, including a game winning three-pointer against rival Murray State earlier this season.

“It’s all about trust” Taylor said. “We trust each other on the court, and that chemistry translates into big moments. The support from our fans has been unreal, and it pushes us to give our best every game.”

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SIUE's defense has been a cornerstone of their winning formula. With an intense full-court press and a deep rotation, the Cougars held opponents to one of the lowest field goal percentages in the conference. Junior forward Lamar Wright attributes their defensive dominance to relentless preparation.

"Coach Barone always preaches defense," Write said. "We pride ourselves on shutting down and making every possession tough. It's a mentality we've embraced."

The surge in performance has energized the SIUE campus, with student attendance at Vadalabene Center at record highs. The team's thrilling style of playing and ability to compete with top-tier programs have brought a new sense of excitement to SIUE athletics.

As the Cougars set their sights on the conference tournament and a potential NCAA Tournament visit, the program's trajectory continues to improve. With a blend of veteran leadership and talent, SIUE basketball is proving that the best is yet to come.

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