

# SIUE Men's Basketball Cougars Take Down Roos For Fourth Straight Win

by Joe Pott

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KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Strong rebounding and stout defense helped SIUE men's basketball run its winning streak to four games Saturday with a 64-54 road win at Kansas City. The Cougars improved to 5-2-its best start to a season in the Division I era. The four consecutive wins also is a first in the Division I era.

"We just won four road games in a row and I am proud of these guys," SIUE Head Coach Brian Barone said. "There has been a lot of winning in the past (at SIUE), it just hasn't been at the Division I era. Our guys went out there today and did another thing that hasn't been accomplished before in the Division I era. That's something I am very proud of and we're going to continue to try to stack these."

Kansas City slipped to 3-6. Offense was tough to come by for both teams. SIUE shot just 32 percent (19-59) for the game. Kansas City connected on 31 percent (21-67) of its shots.

"We had to come here and grind it out," Barone added. "(Kansas City) is a very well-coached team and a very physical team. They made it ugly. We Were a little uglier tonight."

The Cougars hauled in a season-high 47 rebounds and outrebounded the Roos 47-41. Kansas City entered the game as one of the top rebounding teams in the country. SIUE limited Kansas City to 13 offensive rebounds.

"We got some huge rebounds down the stretch," Barone said. SIUE grabbed nine steals and forced 15 turnovers to generate 21 points. SIUE twice built leads of eight points, once in the first half and once in the second half only to watch Kansas City come back both times. Shamar Wright knocked down a three-pointer with 5:08 to play to give the Cougars' their first double-digit lead at 55-45 with 5:08 to play. Kansas City scored the next eight points to cut the lead to 55-53 with 2:36 left. SIUE finished the game on a 9-1 run and limited the Roos to just a single free throw over the final 2:30. The Cougars hit four of their final six free throws to seal the win.

SIUE was 18 for 21 at the free throw line for the game, marking the third time this season the team has connected on at least 80 percent of its free throws. Shamar Wright led SIUE with 16 points. He added eight rebounds and three steals. "He did a great job," Barone said of Shamar Wright. "He really guarded well today. His size and length bothered some of their players."

Damarco Minor scored 13 points. DeeJuan Pruitt scored seven points and hauled in 10 rebounds-his third double-digit rebounding effort this season. Jonathan Kurtas grabbed nine boards and added eight points and a block. "How about Jonathan Kurtas," Barone asked. "I am really proud of his effort. It was a big-time game tonight for JK."

The Cougars return home for a Tuesday night game with Saint Ambrose at First Community Arena.