Taylor's Last-Second Three Lifts Cougars Over Denver

by Joe Pott
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BOX SCORE

MOBILE, Ala. – Ray'Sean Taylor's left wing three-pointer just before time expired gave SIUE men's basketball at 77-74 win over Denver in the Cougars' first game at the South Alabama Jaguar Classic.

Both SIUE and Denver are now 2-2 for the year. Denver had averaged 92 points per game over its first three games.

Denver had fought back and tied the game at 74 with a three-pointer by Tommy Brunner with 11 seconds to play. Taylor walked the ball up the floor stepped to his left and knocked down the game-winner.

Taylor finished with 21 points, including 16 in the second half. He was 5-7 from three-point range and hit four in the second half.

"Ray'Sean shouldn't even be playing as much as he is and he goes out and does this," SIUE Head Coach Brian Barone said. "I could have drawn up 500 plays that would have made me look really cool. At the end of the day, give it to a really good player and let him go make a shot. The guys looked at me, 'like don't call a timeout.'"

SIUE used a late run to get on top before halftime. It was 31-24 when SIUE started on its run. A pair of free throws by Ray'Sean Taylor with 3:46 left in the half gave the Cougars a 32-31 and they never trailed in the game again. SIUE finished the half on a 19-6 run and led 43-37 at the break.

The Cougars build as much as a 13-point lead after a jumper from Shamar Wright with 8:21 to play.

Shamar Wright finished with a team-high 24 points, including 18 in the first half. Damarco Minor turned his second consecutive double-double, scoring 14 points and adding a game-high 13 rebounds.

Bruner led Denver with 33 points. DeAndre Craig and Isaiah Addo-Ankrah each added 10 points.

The Cougars will play its second game in the Jaguar Classic against Nicholls Friday night. Tipoff is slated for 6:00 p.m.

"This is why we came to these things," Barone added. "You have got to find out where you are. At least tonight we know we're plus-three. We'll go back to work."