

Cougars Grind Out Win Over Nicholls at Jaguar Classic

by Joe Pott

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MOBILE, Ala. – SIUE men's basketball limited Nicholls to just 51 points on 26 percent shooting Friday on its way to a 60-51 win in the second game of the South Alabama Jaguar Classic.

The Cougars are 2-0 at the tournament and improved to 3-2 overall. Nicholls finished its tournament 1-2 and fell to 2-3 overall.

"It was impressive today," SIUE Head Coach [Brian Barone](#) said. "Our guys dug so deep."

The Cougars took control with a 10-0 run midway through the first half. Trailing 15-12, the Cougars got points from two points each from [Shamar Wright](#) and [Arnas Sakenis](#) and six on a pair of three-pointers by [Ray'Sean Taylor](#) to lead 22-15 with 6:59 to play before half and never trailed in the game again.

SIUE led 27-24 at halftime. The Cougars pushed their lead to nine early in the half, but never more than that. Nicholls got back to four at 33-29, but never got any closer and when SIUE pushed the lead out again, the Colonels never got any closer than six.

Neither team shot the ball particularly well. SIUE hit 22 of 62 attempts (36 percent), but the Colonels managed just 14-53 field goals. Nicholls had averaged near 11 three-pointers a game coming in, but settled for just seven of 27.

"Our goal was to keep them at six three-pointers," Barone said. "We held them to seven, and just two in the second half. That says a heck of a lot."

SIUE was 7-24 from deep with [Ray'Sean Taylor](#) hitting three of them. Taylor finished with 11 points. [Shamar Wright](#) led SIUE with 15 points. [Lamar Wright](#) added nine points.

The Cougars hauled in 50 rebounds to Nicholls' 32. [Damarco Minor](#) pulled down 11 boards while [Terrance Thompson](#) grabbed a career-best 10 rebounds.

SIUE will next face host South Alabama Sunday afternoon. The Jaguars are 1-1 in the tournament.

"We came here and we have a mission to get three," Barone said. "We have to continue to stay in the moment for our team to have success. We'll enjoy a day off tomorrow and then we'll get right back to it."

Tipoff Sunday is slated for 12 p.m.