

2018 State Farm MVC Tournament – Game Notes

Game 5 ... 6:00 p.m., Friday, March 2 ... St. Louis, Mo. (Scottrade Center) ... #2 Southern Illinois (67), #7 Missouri State (63)

Southern Illinois, after dropping its final two regular-season games, reaches the semifinals for the second year in a row and third time in five years. SIU is 20-12 and at the 20-win mark for the second time in three years. The Salukis are 36-33 in MVC tourney play and 6-5 vs. MSU in the tourney. The win tonight gives SIU a 3-0 sweep over the Bears this season. It was the eighth time in a row SIU Coach Barry Hinson has defeated the MSU team he coached from 1999 to 2008. It is Hinson's second SIU 20-win team. SIU has an all-time 48-37 series edge vs. MSU.

The Salukis are 15-1 when they hold an opponent under 70 points. SIU has scored a trey in 115 straight games. Aaron Cook has scored double digits 18 times. Armon Fletcher has scored double digits 27 times. Sean Lloyd Jr. has scored double digits in 21 games this year. Kavion Pippen has scored double figures 25 times. SIU is 8-2 in games decided by five points or less. Lloyd's 13 points led five Salukis scoring in double figures.

Missouri State fell to 18-15 with the loss and fell to 31-27 all-time in the MVC tourney. Alize Johnson averaged 22 points in two previous games vs. SIU but had six tonight to go with 11 rebounds. It was his 44th double figure rebound game in two years at MSU. He closes his two MSU seasons with 982 points. The Bears are 5-7 in games decided by five points or less. Jarrid Rhodes led MSU with 21 points and Jarred Dixon scored 16. It was the second straight 20-point night by Rhodes in this tourney and he got 13 in the second half tonight.

First Half: Missouri State took an 11-5 lead six minutes into the game but SIU went from a 14-8 deficit with a 9-0 run for a 17-14 edge with 5:30 to play. SIU went ahead 24-18 but the Bears tied the game 24-24 and a late trey by Jarrid Rhodes pulled MSU to within 29-28 at halftime. SIU had eight offensive boards the first half and a 20-16 overall rebound edge. Both clubs shot in the 38 percent range. Alize Johnson had eight MSU rebounds. SIU is 15-2 when ahead at halftime and MSU is 2-11 when trailing at halftime.

Second Half: The teams were even at 33-33 when a 7-0 SIU run made it 40-33 with 15:35 to play. A 5-0 possession after an SIU technical foul cut SIU's lead to 40-38. SIU closed first half hitting 9 of its last 12 shots and made 5 of its first 8 after halftime for a 14-for-20 stretch over 13 minutes. SIU went up 45-40 but MSU got back within 46-45 with 11:23 to play. Two straight baskets by Kavion Pippen moved SIU back in front 52-47 with 9:40 to play. Tyler Smithpeters hit a long three to give SIU its biggest lead at 55-47 and Aaron Cook followed with a trey to make it 58-47 with 7:31 left. MSU went on a 12-0 run to cut a 63-49 deficit to 63-61 with 1:15 left when Cook snapped the SIU drought with a basket with 58 seconds left. Jarred Dixon hit two free throws and the Bears got the ball back on an SIU miss with 18 seconds left but Ryan Kreklow lost the ball on a drive in from the left wing and his bid to tie the game.