



2014 Ohio Valley Conference Men's Basketball Championship
Game 1 – First Round - #5 Tennessee Tech 74 vs. # 8 SIUE 67
March 5, 2014 – Municipal Auditorium (Nashville, Tenn.)

Post-Game Quotes

Tennessee Tech head coach Steve Payne

"Both of our games have been like that with them. We've had a chance to feel like we played well at times and I thought we played well tonight except for a few minutes where we turned the ball over too much in the second half with questionable decisions. I thought that our defense, once we weren't fouling, we got on our heels a little bit and let them attack the paint – our whole game plan was to not let them get in the paint on dribble penetration and create open shots and we did a really poor job of that in the second half. They did a really good job of attacking us. But I thought we made just enough plays defensively and just enough offensively to kind of hang on. I thought that for a while that we played about as good as we could play.

On SIUE's late rally

"We turned it over a lot. They're good offensively. At some point they're going to make some offensive plays. Those four perimeter guys are hard to guard. They've got a couple of guys inside that play well. Offensively, they're just a very good unit. I thought in the second half they just dominated the backboards on us and really out-physicaled us at times. Then even when we got stops I thought we gave them too many second and third opportunities. A lot of credit goes to them on that. They played very hard and they played like it was going to be their last game if they didn't. Sometimes you have to earn these wins and we did. We didn't help ourselves. There was a couple of possessions where we dribbled the ball too much and didn't really attack and share it."

Tennessee Tech senior Jeremiah Samarrippas

On SIUE's late rally

"We've been in that situation so many times this year. We gave up so many leads so we just settled down. I hit a three – which was pretty big for us. I turned the ball over so many times. But (head coach Steve) Payne gives me a lot of freedom and like I said we've been in that situation a lot of times so we were real comfortable."

Tennessee Tech senior Dennis Ogbe

On picking up a win

"It feels good. My last two trips to this tournament were alright, but not what we wanted. We want to win a championship and it's just a good feeling to get a chance to have another shot."

Tennessee Tech junior Javon McKay

On TTU having four players in double-figures

"I think it spreads our offense out a lot more and Jeremiah (Samarrippas) is just finding everyone really well right now. I think he has a lot to do with that."

SIUE Head Coach Lennox Forrester

"First of all, after the game ended I gave our guys a lot of compliment for the job that they've done this year. One was to make it here, so I'm glad to see that our guys returning next year got a taste of what it felt like. I want to say congrats to Tennessee Tech. I thought they played very hard...they were the better team tonight as far as how they executed both offensively and defensively. I thought our guys fought – we were down by 16 or 17 at one point, whatever it was, I thought they fought back and never gave up, and – all of the sudden – with about 1:30 to go it was a four-point ballgame. I just thought it was a good basketball game and I compliment our guys for the effort they gave tonight."

On the tough matchup of guarding TTU Senior Jeremiah Samarrippas

"We knew he was going to be tough and we knew he was going to make big shots...he's just a tough matchup because, if you guard him close, he can blow by you. Bottom line – he can make plays, whether it's shooting the basketball or passing the basketball to his teammates."

On the similarity to the regular season matchup when TTU held on for a 64-63 win

"It was very similar...we were down double-digits and kind of climbed our way back in. But the difference I thought tonight was they made free throws a little better than they did in Cookeville and we were missing free throws. We had several opportunities to cut the deficit even more and we missed some free throws down the stretch. We came out on the short end of the stick, but I'm proud of the way our guys fought tonight."

Post-Game Notes

Tennessee Tech improves to 24-41 in the OVC Tournament and advances to play Morehead State at 6 p.m. on Thursday.

SIUE made the first appearance in the OVC Tournament in school history.

TTU now leads the all-time series 5-2.

TTU shot 58.1 percent for the game, improving to 8-1 on the season when shooting 50 percent or better.

TTU senior Jeremiah Samarrippas tied his career-high with 11 assists. He previously finished with 11 assists while playing at SMU.

SIUE shot 25 percent in the first half while falling behind 38-22...the Cougars then shot 53.6 percent from the field in the second half while out-scoring TTU 45-36 in the 74-67 loss.