

**FORT WAYNE, Ind.** - Despite overcoming a 14-point deficit, the Purdue Fort Wayne women's basketball team dropped its first contest of the 2020-21 season to SIUE 66-50 on Wednesday (Nov. 25) at the Gates Sports Center.

Purdue Fort Wayne forced SIUE to commit 28 turnovers, which is the most a Mastodon team has forced since Milwaukee coughed up 29 against the 'Dons on December 28, 2015.

Hannah Hess led all scorers with 18 points, one shy of her career-high. Jaida Wolfork impressed in her first collegiate game with a double-double, scoring 10 points (4 of 6 from the floor, 2 of 3 from three) and 10 rebounds. She also recorded four steals and only committed one turnover. Riley Ott was the third Mastodon in double-figures, as she also scored 10.

At the conclusion of the first quarter and into the start of the second, Purdue Fort Wayne went on a 7-0 stretch in which Hess scored five points. Shortly thereafter, SIUE led 30-19, but Purdue Fort Wayne stormed back behind Wolfork. The Mastodons went on an 11:30 run over the subsequent 11:30, propelled by 10 points from Wolfork, five from Hess, five from Ott, three from Krisen Hunt and three from Sierra Bell. In this stretch, Purdue Fort Wayne went 9 for 21 from the floor and held SIUE to just nine shots, and forced the Cougars into 13 turnovers. The Mastodons took a lead at 37-34 after Wolfork knocked in a 3-pointer. Wolfork went scored eight straight points for the 'Dons toward the end of the opening half. As the freshman Wolfork scored three straight buckets, freshman Rylie Parker dished out three straight assists. In the 11:30 run, the Mastodons committed no turnovers.

Parker saw 17 minutes of playing time, while Wolfork played for 32 in their collegiate debuts.

SIUE regained some momentum as the game moved into the fourth quarter, as the Cougars outscored the 'Dons 20-8 in the fourth quarter. SIUE took the lead shortly before the final quarter, moving to a 43-42 edge and did not trail again.

Purdue Fort Wayne led the game in 3-pointers (nine to four) and scored 18 points off the 28 forced turnovers.

The Mastodons moved to 0-1 for the 2020-21 season. SIUE moves to 1-0. Purdue Fort Wayne will take the court again on December 5, when they travel to Evansville for a 2 p.m. tip against the Purple Aces.