
little east conference

Thursday, Jan. 17, 2008

EASTERN M-BASKETBALL PUTS IT ALL TOGETHER IN 87-80 WIN

Leon Martin attains 1,000-point milestone in victory over Green Mountain

POULTNEY, Vt. – Senior forward **Leon Martin (Woodbury)** became the 21st player to score 1,000 career points in an Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball uniform and the Warriors matched their season-high in three-point field goals and their season low in turnovers in an 87-80 non-conference victory over Green Mountain College Thursday night at Waldron Gym on the GMC campus.

Needing two points to become the first 1,000-point scorer under sixth-year head coach **Bill Geitner**, the 6-foot-5 inch Martin grabbed an offensive rebound and put it back in on his fourth shot of the game to reach the milestone with 8:10 gone in the game, giving the Warriors a 17-10 lead. Martin finished with 17 points and a team-high ten rebounds, which made for his tenth double-double in 14 games this year and 22nd in 86 career games.

Coming off a five-point Little East Conference loss at Massachusetts Dartmouth two nights earlier, Eastern (8-6) re-grouped to win their fifth game in eight contests away from Geissler Gym and hand Green Mountain (12-3) its first home loss after five victories. Playing as an independent, the Eagles are in their third year on the Division III level after moving down from Division II.

Behind first-year junior guard **Larry Kelley's (New Haven)** season-high 25 points, the Warriors equalled their season-high of 12 three-point field goals. Kelley came off the bench to connect on five of eight tries from three-point range en route to his team-high point total. The top three-point team in the conference, Eastern also got 4-for-9 three-point shooting from junior guard **Kris Johnson (Sturbridge, MA)**. As a team, Eastern improved upon its impressive season three-point percentage of .405 by canning .480 per cent of its tries (12-for-25).

The team's entire game total of only five turnovers – no player had more than one -- equalled its best effort in protecting the ball this season. It was the third time in six games that the Warriors have given the ball away less than ten times.

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Locked in a two-point battle with five minutes left, the Warriors capitalized on three-point and free throw marksmanship to pull away. In that stretch, four straight Eastern baskets came from long range, Johnson drilling three from the left side and Kelley swishing one to vault the break open a tight game, giving the Warriors a nine-point lead with just under three minutes left.

A key play in the late stages of the game came with six minutes left. With the Warriors attempting to protect a four-point lead, Kelley pried the ball loose from a Green Mountain player at half court, raced down the left side, and fed Martin, who was fouled while converting the hoop. Martin's ensuing free throw restored a seven-point advantage. The hosts used four points on their next two possessions to again tighten the gap, but Johnson and Kelley answered with their long-range artillery that, in essence, settled matters.

Leading by nine with two minutes left, the Warriors sealed the deal with seven successful free throws in eight tries by four different players. In the game, Eastern was 10-for-14 from the stripe.

Green Mountain featured a three-pronged attack which inflicted heavy damage -- but the Warriors were able to neutralize the Eagles' supplemental players. Senior forward Doug Hammond (Brooklyn, NY) and backcourt partners Fabian Ferreira (Queens, NY) and Adam Fisher (Miami) combined for all but seven of the Eagles' points and for 30 of 41 rebounds. Hammond had 25 points, a game-high 22 rebounds, and six blocked shots. Fisher a game-high 29 points and six assists, and Ferreira 19 points and five rebounds. Fisher and Ferreira were 16-of-18 from the foul line.

The team's top scorer in each of the previous two games, freshman guard **Courtney Simmons (Middletown)** was content with setting up his teammates this time, handing out a career-high 12 assists.

Against the Eagles, Martin was 6-for-17 from the floor and 5-for-5 from the foul line. In his four-year career, Martin is averaging 11.8 points per game and is shooting .545 per cent from the floor. His free throw shooting against Green Mountain improved his career free throw percentage to .800.

Prior to Martin, guard Gordon Shepard (2000-04) was the last Eastern player to score as many as 1,000 points in a career. Shepard, who played his final two seasons under Geitner, totaled 1,100 points in his four-year career and is currently ranked 13th all-time.

Eastern returns to Little East Conference play Saturday, visiting defending playoff champion Rhode Island College at 3 p.m. at the Murray Center.

little east conference

Tuesday, Jan. 15, 2008

UMASS STAYS PERFECT BY DENYING EASTERN'S UPSET BID, 97-92
In LEC men's basketball, Warriors run out of gas against homestanding Corsairs

NORTH DARTMOUTH, Mass. -- Eastern Connecticut State University's six-point lead with eight minutes left fell under the weight of an 11-point run by the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth as the No. 14 nationally-ranked Corsairs survived an upset bid with a 97-92 Little East Conference men's basketball victory Tuesday night at the Tripp Athletic Center on the UMD campus.

Down by 11 points early in the game, Eastern (7-6, 2-2 little east conference) ran off 13 straight points and surged to a ten-point halftime lead. Eastern led by nine, 61-52, four minutes into the second half and by six, 73-67 with 8:20 left in the game. At that point, UMass Dartmouth (14-0, 4-0 little east conference) ran off 11 straight points over the next three minutes -- getting points from four different players -- to take control with a five-point, 78-73 lead.

Trailing by nine points with less than 30 seconds left, the Warriors scored seven points -- freshman guard **Courtney Simmons (Middletown)** sandwiching a three-point field goal and driving layup around a steal and layup by senior forward **Kevin Zalucki (Enfield)** -- to pull to within one three-point field goal of tying the game, 93-90, with 15 seconds left. The hosts managed to close out the win by going 8-for-10 from the foul line over the final 1:26, including 4-for-4 over the final 13.6 seconds.

Eastern's final point total was its third of 90+ points this season, but the Corsairs' 53 second-half points helped give them the most points allowed by the Warriors this season.

Eastern senior forward **Leon Martin (Woodbury)** moved to within two points of becoming the first 1,000-point scorer under sixth-year head coach **Bill Geitner**. Martin was one of the team's five double-digit scorers, finishing with 17 points. He led the Warriors with 12 first-half points but took only one field goal attempt in the second half. All five of his second-half points came from the foul line, the final two coming with 4:45 left that made it 78-75, UMass.

Eastern posted its best first-half shooting percentage of the season (67.6) in racing to its ten-point halftime lead. The Warriors shot a respectable 45.8 per cent from the floor in the second half, but missed eight of 19 free throws after the break. At 15-for-25, the Corsairs' 60.0 free throw percentage was only marginally better than Eastern's in the second half, but the hosts were given nearly twice as many free throw tries and doubled Eastern's 13 free throw makes in the game.

The Warriors did nothing to discredit their reputation as the top three-point field-goal shooting team in the LEC, canning 11 of 22 attempts and outscoring the hosts by eight points from the

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floor. Eastern also held a +5 rebounding margin, but UMass overcame its three-point and rebounding disadvantage by turning the ball over only four times (twice in each half).

All five Eastern starters finished with double figures. Coming off a career-high 24 points Saturday against Southern Maine, Simmons led all players with 22 points, with sophomore guard **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford)** adding 19 points, Martin 17, junior guard **Kris Johnson (Sturbridge, MA)** 14 and Zalucki ten. Both Martin (11 rebounds) and Zalucki (12 rebounds) recorded double-doubles, while Johnson, Simmons and Ortiz combined to nail 11 of 17 three-pointers.

For the second straight game, Eastern's opponent enjoyed a decisive lift from its bench. Three UMass players came off the bench to score 34 points, while Eastern's starters amassed all but ten of the team's points.

While Eastern's backcourt committed the majority of the scoring damage, UMass' countered with a frontcourt that produced 61 points and 26 rebounds. A non-factor in the first half, sophomore forward Matt Walker of UMass came off the bench in the second half for all 12 of his points and all four of his rebounds. Walker scored ten of his points in the final five minutes. His three-point field goal following an Eastern turnover with five minutes left swung the momentum permanently in UMass's favor - giving the hosts a five-point lead - and he followed second later with a tip-in that restored the five-point lead after a pair of free throws by Martin. Walker was 5-for-6 from the foul line in the final 1:26.

Senior forward Cory Tynes sparked UMass with 19 points and nine rebounds, freshman forward Brandon Stephens scoring 17 points, and senior center Dan Holbrook recovering from a poor first half to total 13 points and a game-high 12 rebounds.

Eastern visits Green Mountain College Thursday at 7 p.m.

little east conference

Saturday, Jan. 12, 2008

SO. MAINE USES FREE THROWS TO SINK EASTERN MEN'S BASKETBALL

Huskies are 11-for-13 from the stripe over the final five minutes in Little East win

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. – The University of Southern Maine men's basketball team sank 11 of 13 free throws over the final five minutes to post a 76-72 Little East Conference victory over Eastern Connecticut State University Saturday afternoon at Francis E. Geissler Gymnasium.

Southern Maine (5-8, 1-2 little east conference) trailed only once over the final five minutes and maintained its lead by converting its free throws. Freshman guard Luke Pollock connected on two free throws with just under four minutes left to make it 67-66, and the Huskies never trailed thereafter.

With the loss, Eastern (7-5, 2-1 little east conference) was denied its first 3-0 start in conference play in 22 years of conference competition and had a three-game winning streak against the Huskies snapped. Southern Maine has won three of five since losing five straight.

Trailing by three, Eastern took a 72-71 lead on an inside basket by senior forward **Leon Martin (Woodbury)** and a driving layup by sophomore guard **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford)** with 1:46 left, but senior forward Drew Copenrath gave the Huskies the lead for good with two free throws. Senior forward Nick Gooding then blocked a driving layup by Eastern sophomore guard **Jared Willis (New Britain)**, grabbed the rebound, and hit one of two free throws to make it 74-72, with 32 seconds left.

Six-foot-six inch Southern Maine senior forward James Catcrina, who sat out five minutes in the second half after picking up his fourth personal foul with 13 minutes left, was 6-for-6 from the stripe over the final six minutes.

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The Huskies led by eight points with eight minutes left in the first half and by six at the break. Eastern scored six straight points to break a tie four minutes into the second half – getting two inside baskets from senior forward **Kevin Zalucki (Enfield)** and a driving layup from freshman guard **Courtney Simmons (Middletown)**.

The No. 1 team in the conference in three-point field goal percentage and free throw percentage, Eastern missed 17 of 24 from behind the arc and seven of 18 from the stripe. Southern Maine was 7-for-15 from three-point range and 17-for-20 from the foul line.

Caterina, playing only his fourth game since returning from injury, had 15 points (9-for-9 from the line) and ten rebounds, while Coppentrath led the Huskies with 16 points (6-for-11 from the floor). Gooding played a key role off the bench, scoring 12 points and grabbing seven rebounds in 22 minutes, while senior guard Foster Oakley helped off the bench with ten points. USM outscored Eastern 27-6 from the bench.

Simmons led all players with a career-high 24 points, hitting ten of 14 from the floor with a variety of jumpers and drives to the basket. He also had six rebounds and four assists. Ortiz added 15 points, Martin 12 points and six rebounds, and Zalucki nine points and nine rebounds. Martin moved to within 19 points of 1,000 in his career.

Eastern visits Massachusetts Dartmouth Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. in a conference game.

little east conference

Thursday, Jan. 10, 2008

FAST START PROPELS EASTERN M-BASKETBALL PAST UNION
Warriors score first ten points of game to post sixth victory in last seven outings, 66-55

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. – The Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team scored the first ten points of the game and led by as many as 19 in the first half on the way to a 66-55 non-conference victory over Union College Thursday night at Geissler Gymnasium.

The win is the sixth in the last seven contests for Eastern (7-4), while Union (4-6) lost for the third straight time. It was the first meeting ever between the programs.

Freshman guard **Courtney Simmons (Middletown)** scored ten of his 11 points in the first half and senior post player **Kevin Zalucki (Enfield)** had six points and six rebounds over the first 20 minutes.

The Warriors led by 16, 40-24, at halftime, but the Dutchmen used a 12-3 run early in the second half to cut their deficit to single digits, 45-36, on a three-pointer from top scorer Steve Madej. Eastern junior guard **Larry Kelley (New Haven)** answered with his only basket of the game – a three-pointer – to restore the double-digit lead six minutes into the second half. Union got to within eight several times in the final minutes, but the Warriors sank five of six free throws in the final 1:37 to withstand the threat.

Sophomore guard **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford)** led Eastern with 16 points, five rebounds and four assists, junior guard **Kris Johnson (Sturbridge, MA)** adding 13 points, Simmons 11 points six assists and four steals. Zalucki posted his second double-double in five games with ten points and ten rebounds.

Drew Desmarais led the Dutchmen with 17 points and 14 rebounds, Nick DiMaggio adding 12 points and Madej ten points.

Eastern returns to Little East Conference action Saturday, hosting the University of Southern Maine at 3 p.m. in search of its third LEC win without a loss.

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Saturday, Jan. 5, 2008

EASTERN MEN'S BASKETBALL WINS FIFTH STRAIGHT, 79-74

HARTFORD, Conn. - Juniors Kris Johnson (Sturbridge, MA/Tantasqua Regional HS) and Larry Kelley (New Haven/Hill Regional HS) combined to shoot 10-for-18 from three-point range in carrying the Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team to a 79-74 victory over RPI in the opening round of the Trinity College Classic Saturday evening at Ray Oosting Gymnasium.

With its fifth straight win, Eastern (6-3) moves into the tourney final Sunday at 3:30 p.m. against Trinity College (9-3), which routed Maine Maritime Academy (3-5) in Saturday's first game. Sunday's consolation is scheduled for 1:30 p.m.

Since absorbing a 33-point loss at Connecticut College Nov. 25, the Warriors have won their last four games away from Geissler Gymnasium. The contest was the first for Eastern after a layoff of over three weeks. A loser of three straight, RPI had been idle since losing two games at Daytona Beach.

Eastern never trailed after the opening minutes and led by nine seven minutes into the second half before the Red Hawks used a 14-5 run to tie the game, 59-59, with 8:30 left. At that point, Johnson hit a three-pointer, to give the Warriors the lead for good, and Kelley sank all three of his second-half three-pointers in a span of three minutes to boost Eastern into an eight-point, 77-69 lead with three minutes left.

Johnson led all scorers with a season-high 20 points - the first time he led the Warriors in scoring since the season-opener. Kelley and freshman guard Courtney Simmons (Middletown/Xavier HS) added 12 each and senior Leon Martin (Woodbury/Nonnewaug HS) adding ten points and 11 rebounds for his fifth straight double-double and seventh in nine games this year. Simmons also had seven assists, sophomore Edwin Ortiz (Hartford/East Catholic HS) dishing out six. Senior Kevin Zalucki added nine points and 11 rebounds for the Warriors, who outscored RPI by 21 points on three-point field goals.

With Martin and Zalucki busy battling 6-foot-8 inch RPI forward Ricky Philatre and RPI top scorer and rebounder Sam Simmons all night, Eastern turned to its backcourt for 57 of its 79-point total. Philatre grabbed 12 of his game-high 14 rebounds in the first half, and Simmons scored all 18 of his team-high total in the second half.

Simmons of RPI scored ten points in the first seven minutes of the second half, but the Warriors got 11 of their first 15 points of the half from their backcourt.

Six-foot-six inch freshman post player Broderick Sawyer (Norwalk/Brien McMahon HS) - the team's first inside player off the bench this year - missed his first game of the year with an ankle sprain sustained Wednesday. He is expected to return Thursday when the Warriors host Union College at 7 p.m. in a makeup game of a Dec. 13 postponement.

A first-year transfer, Kelley had managed only 22 points in limited time through the first seven games of the year before erupting for 23 in helping the Warriors close out first-semester play with a 96-82 win at Mitchell College back on Dec. 10.

Martin's ten points moved him to within 58 points of becoming the first 1,000-point scorer under sixth-year head coach Bill Geitner.

little east conference

Sunday, Jan. 6, 2008

TRINITY HAS ENOUGH TO WITHSTAND EASTERN M-BASKETBALL, 85-77
Bantams outscore Eastern 13-5 to break from late tie and capture their tourney title

HARTFORD, Conn. - Robert Taylor scored eight of his 12 second-half points over the final three minutes of the game to help the Trinity College men's basketball team break from a tie and down Eastern Connecticut State University, 85-77, in the championship game of the Trinity College Classic Sunday afternoon at Ray Oosting Gymnasium.

Eastern (6-4) erased a ten-point deficit in the second half, finally pulling even at 72-all on a three-point field goal from sophomore guard **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford/East Catholic HS)**. At that point, Taylor swished a corner jumper on an inbounds pass to give Trinity (10-3) the lead for good. Taylor dunked for two more baskets the rest of the way, then converted two free throws in the final seconds to complete the scoring.

The loss ends a five-game winning streak for Eastern, which also lost for the first time after four straight victories away from home.

After trailing by 14 points at halftime and losing by 11 against Trinity when the teams met at Willimantic back on Nov. 20, Eastern scored the first seven points and led by a bucket at halftime this time around. In the first half Sunday, senior forwards **Kevin Zalucki (Enfield/East Catholic HS)**, **Leon Martin (Woodbury/Nonnewaug HS)** each scored in double figures and combined for 34 points as the Warriors shot 58.6 per cent.

Eastern played the opening minutes of the second half in stark contrast to the first, scoring only one bucket from the floor and was outscored 17-5 through the first eight minutes in falling behind by ten, 57-47. Led by tournament MVP selection Paul Rowe, a 6-foot-4 inch junior, the Bantam connected on six of their first ten field goals of the second half in building their ten-point lead. With seven points, Rowe was one of four different players to contribute points in that 17-5 run, when Trinity exploited its inside strength. All-tournament pick Russ Martin, a 6-foot-7 inch senior, also dropped in six points in that span.

Facing the ten-point deficit, Eastern quickly re-grouped by scoring seven straight points to cut the gap to two, 64-62, with just over seven minutes left. Martin, who represented

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Eastern on the all-tournament team, keyed the comeback. He scored once when Trinity was called for goaltending, then grabbed a rebound and fed sophomore guard **Jared Willis (New Britain/Northwest Catholic HS)** for a driving layup. Martin stole a pass on Trinity's next possession and hustled to the other end of the floor to score a basket while being fouled. He sank the free throw to make it a two-point game.

Eastern would score only twice more from the floor after Martin's three-point play – on three-point field goals by Ortiz – but used perfect (10-for-10) free throw shooting to remain within striking distance until the final minute.

Both teams were efficient from the foul line. Eastern was 18-of-20 in the game, Trinity 13-of-16.

Ortiz led Eastern with 21 points and six assists. Martin had 20 points and a game-high 12 rebounds (nearly half of the team's total of 26) to record his eighth double-double in ten games this year. In 38 minutes, he also had six assists and three steals. Zalucki had 14 points and six rebounds in 37 minutes, but only two of his points and two of his rebounds came after the first half, when he connected on all six of his field goals. He was 7-for-10 from the floor in the game.

Eastern managed to split its two tournament games (the Warriors beat RPI, 79-74, in Saturday's opening round) despite an inside game which has been hindered by injury. Senior 6-foot-3 inch forward **Ivan Pinder (Baltimore, MD/Fitch Sr. HS)** was limited to a cameo appearance in both games due to nagging shin splints, and freshman 6-foot-6 inch forward **Broderick Sawyer (Norwalk/Brien McMahon HS)** missed both games after twisting his ankle in practice Wednesday.

In the tournament, Martin had 30 points, 23 rebounds, six assists, four steals and three blocked shots. His point total moves him to within 38 of 1,000 in his four-year career.

Rowe and Taylor of Trinity led all players with 22 points each. Rowe topped his team with seven rebounds and six assists. He was 9-for-16 from the floor in helping the Bantams stick 53.2 per cent of their shots. Martin added 17 points (7-for-11 from the floor).

Eastern hosts Union College Thursday at 7 p.m. in a makeup game.

little east conference

Monday, Dec. 10, 2007

EASTERN M-BASKETBALL ROLLS TO FOURTH STRAIGHT WIN

Kelley scores 23 in first double-figure game of career in 96-82 victory over Mitchell

NEW LONDON, Conn. – First-year junior guard **Larry Kelley (New Haven/Hill Regional Career HS)** scored a career-high 23 points off the bench and senior forward **Leon Martin (Woodbury/Nonnewaug HS)** posted his sixth double-double of the season as the Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team rolled to its fourth straight win, a 96-82 non-conference decision over Mitchell College Monday night at the Yarnall Center.

Eastern (5-3) shot 66.7 per cent from the floor in building a 13-point, 45-32 halftime lead, and led by as many as 19 points, 65-46, seven minutes into the second half. The Warriors shot a season-high 62.3 per cent in the game, including 9-for-20 from three-point range and 21-for-26 from the foul line.

Kelley, a transfer from Quinnipiac University, exceeded his previous career game-high of nine points by scoring 13 points in the first half, with Martin and sophomore guard **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford/East Catholic HS)** each scoring ten over the 20 minutes and freshman point guard **Courtney Simmons (Middletown/Xavier HS)** adding eight. In the first half, Kelley was 5-for-7 and Martin 4-for-4 from the floor.

Leading by five, 36-31, with three minutes left in the first half, the Warriors held the Pequots scoreless from the floor the rest of the half, outscoring the hosts 9-1 to take their 13-point lead into the locker room. Ortiz scored eight of Eastern's final ten points of the half with a three-point field goal, driving layup following a steal by senior post player **Kevin Zalucki (Enfield/East Catholic HS)**, and three free throws.

Kelley scored all 13 of his first-half points in a span of nine minutes off the bench. He canned three straight three-pointers in that stretch than helped the Warriors move out to a nine-point, 31-22 lead before Mitchell called time with seven minutes left in the stanza.

Martin (24 points), Kelley, Simmons (career-high 20) and Ortiz (18) combined for all but 11 of Eastern's points. Martin added a team-high ten rebounds for his sixth double-double of the season, fourth straight during the current four-game winning streak. Ranked second a year ago in the Little East Conference in field goal percentage, Martin

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sank nine of 11 against Mitchell (0-8) to boost his season percentage to 55.3. In 33 minutes, Kelley was 8-for-13 from the floor (5-for-9 from three-point range) and Simmons 6-for-10. Simmons also tied his game-best with seven assists and added a career-high six steals (he had a total of three through the first seven games), while Kelley handed out four assists and had two steals.

Zalucki helped Eastern to a six-rebound advantage by grabbing nine in 27 minutes.

Eastern has won three games on its current four-game winning streak on its opponents' court, which matches last year's entire total. In the last four wins, the Warriors are shooting 50.0 per cent from the floor and 76.0 per cent from the foul line and are averaging 9.0 three-pointers per game. In that span, Martin is averaging a team-leading 25.8 points and 10.8 rebounds and is shooting 65.5 per cent from the floor and 80.6 per cent from the stripe. Ortiz is 13-for-16 from the foul line, Simmons 15-for-20, and Kelley 5-for-5.

Eastern hosts first-time opponent Union College Thursday at 7 p.m.

little east conference

Saturday, Dec. 8, 2007

EASTERN M-BASKETBALL WINS THIRD STRAIGHT, 83-67
Double-doubles by Zalucki and Martin fuel Little East victory over UMass Boston

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. -- Senior post players **Kevin Zalucki (Enfield)** and **Leon Martin (Woodbury)** survived early second-half foul trouble to record double-doubles in points and rebounds and power the Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team to an 83-67 Little East Conference victory over the University of Massachusetts Boston Saturday afternoon at Francis E. Geissler Gymnasium.

The win is the third straight for Eastern (4-3, 2-0 little east) and the loss the sixth in a row for UMass (1-8, 0-2 little east). The final 16-point margin is the largest by either team in this series in the last 11 games between the programs.

Eastern scored the first nine points of the game, but the Beacons ran off ten straight points later in the half to take their only lead of the game, 27-25, with just over four minutes left in the first half. The Warriors outscored UMass 9-2 the remainder of the half to take a five-point, 34-29 lead into the locker room, then outscored UMass 10-2 over the first three minutes of the second half to surge to a 13-point, 44-31 lead. Eastern's second-half lead never dipped below double digits and crested at 20 with five minutes left.

Led by Martin, all five Eastern starters scored at least ten points. Martin recorded his third straight double-double and fifth in the last six games with a game-high 24 points and 11 rebounds. Zalucki put together his first double-double since midway through last season with season-high totals of 19 points and 13 rebounds. The 6-foot-7 inch Zaluck sank nine of his first ten shots and finished the afternoon by connecting on nine of 12 tries from the floor. Martin pushed his season field goal percentage over .500 to .518 with a 9-for-13 performance from the floor and 6-for-7 showing from the stripe.

Martin was whistled for his third personal foul less than four minutes into the second half and Zalucki picked up his third with 11 minutes left in the game. Martin left the game with Eastern leading by 12 points, and returned four minutes later with the Warriors in charge of a 16-point advantage. Both players picked up one additional foul, but neither fouled out.

Senior guard **Kris Johanson (Sturbridge, MA)** tossed in 14 points (4-for-9 from three-point range), sophomore guard **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford)** adding 11 points (eight in the first half) and five assists and freshman point guard **Courtney Simmons (Middletown)** had ten points, six assists and five rebounds.

Behind Simmons and Zalucki, the Warriors turned the ball over a season-low 11 times -- nearly half its season's average. Simmons had just one turnover in 37 minutes and Zalucki one in 34.

Sophomore forward Terrell Maddox had a team-high 20 points and eight rebounds in 28 minutes off the bench for UMass, with senior forward Amigo Paniagua adding 16 points and eight rebounds. Also off the bench, sophomore guard Anthony Matlock contributed 15 points. Maddox was 7-for-11 from the floor and 6-for-7 from the foul line.

Eastern visits Mitchell College Monday at 7 p.m.

little east conference

Saturday, Dec. 1, 2007

FREE THROWS LIFT EASTERN M-BASKETBALL OVER PLYMOUTH

Warriors open Little East with first road win over Panthers in eight seasons

PLYMOUTH, N.H. -- The Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team converted 20 of 23 free throws in the second half to stave off Plymouth State University for a 97-84 victory in the Little East Conference opener for both teams Saturday at Foley Gymnasium.

The win over Plymouth is Eastern's (3-3) first over the Panthers at Foley Gymnasium since a 105-90 double overtime victory in 2000. The Warriors had lost nine straight here since that victory,, including last year's 52-51 loss. It gives Eastern two straight wins over Plymouth since the Warriors swept the season series during the 1993/94 season.

Eastern never trailed after the opening minutes, took an eight-point, 44-36 lead into the lockerroom , and by nine, 56-47, eight minutes into the second half. Plymouth (3-3) made several runs over the final minutes, but the Warriors came up with key baskets and hit their free throws to maintain the upper hand.

A pair of Plymouth free throws with 6:31 left cut Eastern's lead to three, but freshman point guard **Courtney Simmons (Middletown)** dropped in a driving layup after an Eastern timeout Plymouth turned the ball over and missed a shot on its next two possessions, and senior forward **Ivan Pinder (Baltimore, MD)** sank two free throws, then completed a traditional three-point play – the layup set up on a behind-the-back pass from sophomore guard **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford)** – moments later to make it an eight-point game with three minutes left.

First-year junior guard **Larry Kelley (New Haven)** came off the bench for six important points after Plymouth had pulled to within four points with just under ten minutes left. He drained a three-point, then took a pass from Pinder and scored while being fouled, then swished the free throw to make it 73-64.

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As a team, Eastern connected on 17 of 19 free throws over the final ten minutes., 20 of 23 in the second half, and 28 of 34 in the game.

Senior forward **Leon Martin (Woodbury)** was 8-of-11 from the stripe, and amassed his fourth double-double of the season with a game-high 26 points and 11 rebounds. Ortiz added 18 points, Simmons 17, and junior guard **Kris Johnson (Sturbridge, MA)** 12. Pinder grabbed a season-high rebounds, six coming in the second half.

Simmons sat out the final 12 minutes of the first half with two fouls, then picked up his third less than a minute into the second. Johnson was 3-for-4 from three-point range in the first half, Johnson sank two three-pointers in two minutes to give Eastern an 11-point lead with six minutes left in the first half, and Ortiz contributed seven straight points in the closing minutes of the first half.

Sophomore guard Jason O'Keefe came off the bench for Plymouth to score 26 points, with sophomore forward Mike Cherrey adding 20 points on 7-for-11 shooting from the floor and 6-for-6 marksmanship from the foul line. He also had six rebounds. Junior guard Ben Huntington had 19 points on 50 per cent field goal shooting and 6-for-6 free-trow shooting. He also had six rebounds but turned the ball over seven times.

Plymouth was charged with 31 fouls, with Cherrey and two teammates fouling out in the final minutes.

Eastern hosts Massachusetts Boston Saturday at 1 p.m. in a Little East Conference game.

little east conference

Wednesday, Nov. 28, 2007

MARTIN BOOSTS EASTERN M-BASKETBALL PAST WESLEYAN

Senior scores career-high 29 points in 81-78 double overtime thriller over Cardinals

MIDDLETOWN, Conn. -- Game-high scorer senior forward **Leon Martin (Woodbury)** sank a three-pointer 65 seconds into the second overtime to give the Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team the lead for good and the Warriors went on to secure an 81-78 double-overtime victory over Wesleyan University Wednesday evening at Silloway Gymnasium.

The victory snaps a three-game losing streak for Eastern (2-3), which defeated a Connecticut opponent for the first time after convincing losses to Trinity College and Connecticut College over a six-day span last week. The Warriors have beaten Wesleyan (1-5) each of the last two years following five consecutive losses to the Cardinals.

The only Eastern player in double figures, Martin ended the contest with a career-high 29 points and added a team-high 11 rebounds for his third double-doubles in five games this year. He also had four of Eastern's 11 blocked shots, giving him 14 rejections already this season.

Following Martin's three-pointer -- his second of the game and season -- Eastern extended its lead to six points in the second five-minute overtime to 79-73 freshman point guard **Courtney Simmons' (Middletown)** free throw and a basket by senior forward **Ivan Pinder (Baltimore, MD)** at the 2:50 mark, but Wesleyan rallied to cut the margin to 79-77 with 23 seconds left.

The Cards blew chances to first tie, then go ahead, in the second overtime, but missed three of four free throws inside the final 25 seconds. First-year junior guard **Larry Kelley (New Haven)** grabbed the rebound of one missed free throw, and senior center **Kevin Zalucki (Enfield)** pulled in the other. Zalucki was fouled on his rebound and made only one of two, leaving Eastern with a two-point lead with 15 seconds left. Kelley came up with his first career blocked shot with two seconds left, and sophomore guard **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford)** canned one to seal the win.

Wesleyan junior guard Kevin Scura had forced overtime when he swished his fourth three-pointer of the game at the buzzer ending regulation. Kelley's block in the final seconds came on Scura's three-point, game-winning try.

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Eastern led by nine points in the first half and by as many as 11 in the second, but could not put away the Cardinals. Triggered by Kelley's two three-pointers, the Warriors used a run of 13 straight points to turn a four-point deficit into a nine-point, 26-17 lead with 6:05 left in the first half, but the Cardinals later rallied to tie. Eastern led by six at the break.

Eastern pulled out to its largest lead at 55-44 eight minutes into the second half, but Wesleyan eventually tied it at 59-59 on a basket by senior Nick Pelletier (13 points, 13 rebounds) with just under three minutes left in regulation. The score was tied twice before Martin sank three free throws to give the Warriors a 66-63 lead with nine seconds left. Scura forced overtime with a three-point bomb from the deep left corner.

Wesleyan enjoyed a five point lead in the first extra period, its largest margin of the game, but Eastern scored the final five points of the frame on free throws by Simmons and Martin and a basket by Pinder to knot the game with 40 seconds left. Each team missed an attempt in the final five seconds.

A career 56 per cent field goal and 79 per cent free-throw shooter, Martin was 9-for-16 from the floor and 9-for-11 from the stripe, while Zalucki and Pinder each grabbed six rebounds and Ortiz five. Pinder had three steals, while the 5-foot-10 inch Simmons blocked three shots.

Junior forward Stan Grayson led Wesleyan with a career-high 24 points (10-for-15 from the floor) and added nine rebounds and three steals.

Eastern opens Little East Conference play Saturday at 3 p.m. at Plymouth State University.

Sunday, Nov. 25, 2007

CONN SHOOTS 75 PER CENT IN FIRST HALF IN EASY VICTORY

Warriors can't match Camels' marksmanship in 87-54 non-conference loss

NEW LONDON, Conn. -- Over the first six minutes of the game, the Connecticut College men's basketball team converted eight of its first nine shots from the floor and capitalized on four turnovers in racing to a 16-point lead on the way to an easy 87-54 non-conference victory Sunday afternoon at the Charles Luce Field House.

Conn (4-0) stuck ten of 14 three-pointers in the first half in easing to a 24-point, 55-31 halftime lead, then scored eight of the first ten points in the first two minutes of the second half to push its advantage to 30, 63-33.

The loss is the third straight for Eastern (1-3) after a season-opening victory last Friday night.

The Warriors shot 52 per cent from the floor in the first half, but were no match for the Camels. Conn sank ten of 14 three-pointers in the first half, shooting at 75 per cent (21-for-28) overall over the first 20 minutes. In the game, Conn was 13-for-19 from three-point range, shooting 63.0 per cent from the floor overall.

Conn's starters were 27-for-34 from the floor. Six-foot-six inch post player Charles Stone of Conn was 9-for-9 from the floor and finished with a game-high 19 points in 25 minutes. Senior forward Jeff Young was 5-for-5 from three-point range and followed Stone with 17 points.

All 16 Eastern players saw time, with only sophomore guard **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford)** managing double figures, totaling ten. Freshman post player **Broderick Sawyer (Norwalk)** came off the bench go score nine points. He was 4-for-5 from the floor.

Eastern visits Wesleyan University Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.

little east conference

Tuesday, Nov. 20, 2007

FOR EASTERN M-BASKETBALL, SECOND-HALF RALLY FALLS SHORT

Warriors whittle 19-point deficit to six before succumbing to Trinity College, 65-54

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. – Freshmen **Brian Givens (New Haven)** and **Broderick Sawyer (Norwalk)** came off the bench to combine for 12 points and eight rebounds to spark a second-half rally but the Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team fell short in a 65-54 loss to Trinity College Tuesday evening at Francis E. Geissler Gymnasium.

Eastern (1-2) managed only two field goals over the first nine minutes of the game in dropping back by 14 points and trailed by 19 points late in the first before staging a second-half rally. The Warriors cut the deficit to single digits with four minutes left in the game and to six points on a bucket by Sawyer with just under a minute remaining. Trinity (3-0), which returned eight letterwinners from last year's NCAA tournament qualifier, scored the final five points on four free throws by 6-foot-5 inch senior forward Robert Taylor (game-high 18 points) and one by junior forward Paul Rowe.

The Warriors turned the ball only 12 times – five in the second half when they outscored the visitors, 30-26.

Behind the 6-foot-6 inch Sawyer, Eastern got 26 points, 15 rebounds and eight assists off the bench from five players. Sawyer had a team and career-high 12 points and added five rebounds, while Givens added four points, five rebounds and three assists, and first-year junior transfer **Larry Kelley (New Haven)** five points, three rebounds and two assists. Each committed only one turnover in 52 minutes.

Trinity scored numerous uncontested baskets in the paint – collecting a half-dozen dunks -- in racing to its 15-point, 39-24 lead in the first half. Taylor had 12 points on 6-for-8 shooting and five rebounds over the first 20 minutes, with 6-foot-8 inch senior Stephen Dunn adding eight points and seven rebounds, and 6-foot-7 senior Russ Martin eight points and four rebounds. The Warriors controlled the tempo in the second half, however, and used a 12-3 run to cut the gap to 10, 50-40, with ten minutes left.

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Eastern appeared headed for a rout after scoring 13 of the game's first 17 points, but the Saints used a 12-2 run over five minutes to take their first lead, 16-15. Two free throws by senior guard **Sara Paradis (Bristol)**, however, gave Eastern the lead for good late in the first half and propelled it to a four-point halftime advantage. As they did in the Eastern Tip-Off Tournament championship game win over Colby Sunday, the Warriors took command right from the get-go after the break. Against Emmanuel, Eastern ran off eight straight points to turn a three-point lead into an 11-point cushion, 37-26, four minutes into play. Durette had four points in the run and Morey a pair, and freshman guard **Jessica Moriarty (East Haven)** had a basket, rebound and assist.

Morey, named the MVP of the Eastern Tip-Off Tournament, led Eastern against Emmanuel with 22 points (12-for-14 from the stripe) and seven assists, while Smith followed with 16 points and six rebounds, and Durette 13 points and nine rebounds. In three games, Smith has nearly doubled her entire point total of a year ago. Six-foot-2 inch center **Ashley McFetridge (Canton)** had eight points, a game-high ten rebounds, and two blocked shots. Moriarty had nine points, eight rebounds and four assists before fouling out in the final minute.

Eastern plays the fourth of five straight season-opening home games Tuesday at 7 p.m. against Salve Regina University.

little east conference

Friday, Nov. 16, 2007

EASTERN M-BASKETBALL MOVES INTO TIP-OFF FINAL

Scoring spurt midway through second half pushes Warriors past ENC, 79-60

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. – Junior guard **Kris Johnson (Sturbridge, MA)** scored 12 of his team-high 15 points in the second half to help the Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team pull away for a 79-60 victory over Eastern Nazarene College Friday afternoon in the opening round of the 2007 Eastern Tip-Off Basketball Tournament at Francis E. Geissler Gymnasium.

The win moves Eastern (1-0) into the final of the tournament for the 23rd time in 27 years, where they will face St. Mary's College (MD) Saturday at 3 p.m. in the title game. St. Mary's (1-0) got a game-high 27 points from Tyson Lesesne to rout Mitchell College, 102-65, in Friday's other first-round game. Mitchell (0-1) faces Eastern Nazarene (0-1) in the third-place game Saturday at 1 p.m.

Johnson and sophomore guard **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford)** both sank three-pointers to spark a 12-3 run midway through the second half that turned a seven-point lead into a 16-point cushion, 64-48, with seven minutes left.

Eastern Nazarene outshot the Warriors by seven points from the free-throw line and forced Eastern into nine more turnovers, but the Crusaders missed ten of 12 three-pointers, shot just 33.3 per cent from the floor in the game, and were outrebounded by 19.

Johnson, who missed all but eight games last year with a broken hand, was 4-for-6 from three-point range in the second half in scoring 12 points. As a team, the Warriors canned ten of 19 three-pointers and blocked seven shots.

Ortiz, last year's Little East Conference Rookie-of-the-Year, and senior post player **Kevin Zalucki (Enfield)** added 12 points each, and senior forward **Ivan Pinder (Baltimore, MD)** chipped in ten points. Zalucki led all players in the game with nine rebounds, senior forward **Leon Martin (Woodbury)** and freshman point guard **Courtney Simmons (Middletown)** adding seven each. Simmons, one of two freshmen in the starting lineup, also handed out seven assists and grabbed seven rebounds and sank all four of his free throws.

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Senior forward Jean-Paul Marcellus (Dorchester, MA) paced the Crusaders with 18 points. Sophomore guard Alex Carr (Middletown, MD) added 11 points and junior guard Colby DaSilva (Bridgewater, MA) scored 11 off the bench. Eastern Nazarene is coming off last year's 2-23 campaign.

LESESNE POWERS ST. MARY'S PAST MITCHELL, 102-65

Senior guard Tyson Lesesne (Edgewood, MD) hit all five of his second-half field goals and finished with a game-high 27 points as St. Mary's College raced past Mitchell College in its tip-off tournament debut. Mitchell is 0-5 in three tournament appearances over the last three years.

Mitchell used a 17-6 run to erase an early deficit for a four-point, 29-25 lead with eight minutes left in the first half, but was held scoreless from the floor over the final seven minutes as St. Mary's scored the final 19 points of the first half to take a 50-29 advantage into the lockerroom.

Lesesne was 11-for-18 from the floor to lead the Seahawks. Junior post player Alex Irmer (Alexandria, VA) added 13 points (5-for-7 from the floor) as 12 different players contributed to the scoring.

Sophomore guard Eric Murray (Bridgeport, CT) led the Pequots with 22 points and five rebounds. He was 9-for-19 from the floor. He scored 15 of his team's 36 second-half points.

Saturday, Nov. 17, 2007

ST. MARY'S (MD) WINS EASTERN TIP-OFF TITLE, 94-88

In first tourney appearance, Seahawks capture men's championship

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. – Tournament MVP Tyson Lesesne hit four free throws in the final 30 seconds to help the St. Mary's College (MD) men's basketball team stave off a late Eastern Connecticut State University rally in a 94-88 victory in the championship game of the 27th Annual Eastern Tip-Off Tournament Saturday afternoon at Francis E. Geissler Gymnasium.

Eastern (1-1) trailed by as many as 18 points in the second half and by 14 with four minutes left before rallying to pull to within four points with 30 seconds left. In the final half-minute, however, Lesesne sank all four of his free-throw tries to help St. Mary's (2-0) maintain the lead.

Lesesne, a six-foot guard, scored 42 points on 14-for-25 shooting from the floor and 11-for-11 free-throw shooting (9-for-9 in the title game) to cop tournament Most Outstanding Player honors in leading the Seahawks to the tournament title in their first appearance. In a 102-64 first-round win over Mitchell College Friday night, Lesesne scored a game-high 27 points, sinking 11 of 18 shots from the floor.

Lesesne was joined on the all-tournament team by teammates Mike Smelkinson and Alex Irmer. A 5-foot-5 inch senior guard, Smelkinson posted two-game totals of 23 points and 15 assists. A 6-foot-7 inch junior forward, Irmer had 27 points and 12 rebounds and canned 11 of 19 attempts from the floor.

Freshman forward Mikey Fitzpatrick scored 11 points in the first half and the Seahawks shot 51.4 per cent from the floor in building a 12-point, 48-36 lead at the half against Eastern. The lead crested at 18 points with nine minutes left in the game. The Warriors used a 9-3 spurt in the final minutes, and trailed by only three with 13 seconds left after sophomore guard **Jared Willis (New Britain)** hit a jumper. Lesesne then hit two free throws, and Smelkinson stole the ball and hit the back end of a two-shot opportunity to nail down the win with three seconds left.

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Fitzpatrick led all Seahawk players in the game with 17 points, Lesesne and Smelkinson finishing with 16 points, seven assists and five steals in the balanced lineup, and Irmer 14 points and eigh rebounds.

Senior forward **Leon Martin (Woodbury)** and sophomore guard **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford)** represented Eastern on the all-tournament team. In the tournament, Martin had 24 points, 17 rebounds and eight blocked shots. Ortiz had 35 points and nine assists in the tournament. In the final, Ortiz had a game-high 23 points and added five assists and five rebounds. Eleven of his points in the championship game came on as many free-throw tries. Martin had 16 points, a game-high ten rebounds and a game-high six blocked shots in the championship tilt.

Junior forward Dan Shaw represented Eastern Nazarene College on the all-tournament team. Shaw had 18 points and 14 rebounds in two games. After losing, 79-60, to Eastern Friday, the Crusaders downed Mitchell College, 70-62 Sunday, to finish third. Sophomore guard Alex Carr scored a team-high 17 points and three teammates chipped in ten each in the victory. Junior guard Kendall Lanham of Mitchell led all players with 21 points.

The appearance in the final was the 23rd for Eastern, which has won seven times. Eastern has lost in the title game the last three seasons after winning back-to-back crowns in 2003 and 2004.

Eastern hosts Trinity College Tuesday at 5:30 p.m.