
little east conference

Saturday, Nov. 15, 2008

EASTERN M-BASKETBALL DUMPS BERKELEY IN OPENER

Ortiz sinks 7 of 11 field goals in 82-61 win in Roadrunner Tip-Off Tournament

MAHWAH, N.J. -- Junior guard **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford)** was 7-for-11 from the floor en route to a game-high 20 points and sophomore forward **Bill Roveto (South Windsor)** scored a career-high 12 points off the bench as the Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team opened its 2008/09 season with an 82-61 victory over Berkeley College (N.J.) in the opening game of the Ramapo College Roadrunner Tip-Off Tournament at the Bradley Center Saturday night.

Eastern advances to the tournament championship game Sunday at 3 p.m. against host Ramapo College, which pummeled Yeshiva University, 80-39, in Saturday's second first-round game. Berkeley meets Yeshiva in Sunday's 1 p.m. consolation game.

All 15 players on the roster saw action for Eastern, which used a 17-3 burst in the opening minutes to open up a 14-point, 23-9 lead seven minutes into action. Eastern's starting backcourt of Ortiz, sophomore **Courtney Simmons (Middletown)** and freshman **Nick Nedwick (Irvington, NY)** combined for all 16 points in that run, hitting all six of their field goals Simmons opened and closed the spurt with jumpers, while Ortiz hit three three-pointers and Nedwick added a bucket.

Roveto, who scored 26 points in 25 games as a freshman, helped the Warriors maintain their 14-point halftime lead by sinking all five of his field goals and scoring 11 of his points in 11 minutes in the second half. The Warriors shot 63.0 percent from the floor in the second half in building a 27-point lead with seven minutes left.

Nedwick finished with 11 points, while freshman forward **Jamie Kohn (Columbia)** shared game-high rebounding honors with seven that helped the Warriors to an 11-rebound advantage.

Ortiz had six three-pointers (on seven attempts) to move into sole possession of third place all-time with 134 three-pointers in 53 career games.

Berkeley, which opened its season with two losses to junior college opponents, got a team-high 17 points from Donovan Black. Black missed seven of 11 field goals but was 10-for-13 from the free-throw line.

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Sunday, Nov. 16, 2008

EASTERN M-BASKETBALL BATTLES RAMAPO BEFORE FALLING, 70-63

At Roadrunner tournament, Warriors were within a field goal of tying in final seconds

MAHWAH, N.J.: Senior guard Tim Wesley had 15 points and 12 rebounds in the second half and the Ramapo College men's basketball team outscored Eastern Connecticut State University by 18 points from the free throw line in a 70-63 win in the title game of the Ramapo College Roadrunner Tip-Off Tournament Sunday afternoon.

Wesley, a 6-foot-2 inch guard, led both teams in the game with 24 points and 15 rebounds as the Roadrunners successfully defended their title. Ramapo had pummeled Yeshiva University, 80-39, in Saturday's first round while Eastern routed Berkeley College (NJ), 82-61.

Against Ramapo, freshman forward **Jeremy Thompson (Berlin)** came off the bench to score 20 points and grab seven rebounds with just one turnover in 17 minutes. Thompson matched Wesley's second-half scoring with 15 points of his own in ten minutes. He was 6-for-8 from the floor in the second half and 8-for-11 in the contest. Thompson took only two shots and scored two points in Saturday's opening win.

Eastern limited Ramapo to 23.5 per cent shooting in the first half and trailed by only two points at halftime. A bucket by sophomore center **Broderick Sawyer (Norwalk)** pushed Eastern into its only lead in the opening minute of the second half before Ramapo went on a 13-2 run that opened up a nine-point lead less than three minutes into the half. Wesley scored four points in the run and set up all but two of the points with either a rebound or steal.

Eastern trailed by as many as ten points in the second half, but pulled to within three points in the final minute by scoring six straight points, and had possession of the ball in the final seconds with a chance to tie. A steal by sophomore point guard **Courtney Simmons (Middletown)** set up Thompson for one basket in that stretch, and after the hosts committed an unforced turnover, sophomore forward **Bill Roveto (South Windsor)** completed a three-point play with a free throw with 35 seconds left. Wesley then turned the ball over, but Simmons' potential game-tying three-pointer wouldn't drop. The Warriors were forced to foul after missing from the floor twice, and Wesley iced the win with four free throws.

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Ramapo, which has won 20 or more games in five of the last seven years, was 25-for-35 from the foul line while Eastern was 7-for-12. Seven Eastern players finished the game with at least three fouls, with Simmons and Roveto charged with four each and Thompson fouling out in the waning seconds.

Eastern's starting lineup against Ramapo consisted of a junior, two sophomores and two freshmen.

After combining to convert 15 of 31 tries from the floor in Saturday's first-round win, Eastern's three starting guards missed 24 of 32 attempts against Ramapo. Thompson was the team's only double-digit scorer, while Sawyer and freshman forward **Jamie Kohn (Columbia)** led Eastern with eight rebounds each, Thompson adding seven.

Thompson and junior guard **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford)** represented Eastern on the all-tournament team. Ortiz had a game-high 20 points (7-for-11 FG/6-for-7 three-pointers) against Berkeley and posted two-game tournament totals of 28 points, five rebounds and five assists. Thompson had 22 points and 12 rebounds in 27 minutes in the tournament, sinking 9 of 13 field goals.

Yeshiva dumped Berkeley, 65-48, in Sunday's consolation game.

Joining Wesley, Thompson and Ortiz on the all-tournament team were Ahmad Hassan of Ramapo, Chen Biron of Yeshiva, and Donovan Black of Berkeley.

Eastern hosts New England College Friday at 5:30 in the opening game of the Eastern Tip-Off Tournament.

Tuesday, Nov. 25, 2008

EASTERN'S SECOND-HALF RALLY SHOCKS TRINITY, 75-72
Behind Willis and Thompson, Warriors climb out of 19-point hole in comeback win

HARTFORD, Conn. -- Junior point guard **Jared Willis (New Britain)** made the most of his first career start and freshman center **Jeremy Thompson (Berlin)** came off the bench to score a game-high 19 points and lead visiting Eastern Connecticut State University to a 75-72 win over Trinity College in men's basketball action Tuesday night at Ray Oosting Gymnasium.

Trinity (1-3) shot nearly 60 per cent in the first half to take a 13-point lead into halftime, and was in possession of a comfortable 19 point lead in the opening minutes of the second half before Eastern (3-2) responded with a startling comeback that provided the Warriors with their first win at Oosting Gym since a 72-68 verdict six years ago.

Trailing by 18, Eastern launched a 26-8 run on the strength of 11-for-17 shooting from the floor over ten minutes to tie the game at 64-64 with six minutes left, then took its first lead of the second half, 69-67, on a bucket by sophomore forward **Broderick Sawyer (Norwalk)** that was set up on a steal by freshman guard **Nick Nedwick (Irvington, NY)** with 4:05 left. Five different players each contributed to the team's first five baskets in that stretch, with junior guard **Jared Willis (New Britain)** scoring seven points and Thompson adding a conventional three-point play.

Leading by those 18 points, Trinity went eight minutes without a field goal, scoring just three points from the foul line in that stretch as Eastern cut the deficit to seven, 61-54, with eight minutes left.

Neither team led by more than three points over the final six minutes. Willis converted two free throws to give Eastern the lead for good, 73-72, with 39.9 seconds left. In a key sequence, Trinity then lost possession of the ball and the Warriors were granted a timeout after recovering the loose ball in a pileup with 31.6 seconds left. Eastern missed the front end of a one-and-one with 20.8 seconds left, but the Bantams missed a field goal on their next possession, and freshman forward **Jamie Kohn (Columbia)** contributed two insurance points with free threes after Aaron Westbrook was whistled for a blocking foul near mid court with 11.9 seconds left. Down by three and inbounding at half court with 7.7 seconds left, Trinity's Luke MacDougall's off-balance three-point attempt at the horn bounced off the side of the rim as time expired.

Willis (11 points) and Thompson combined for 21 of Eastern's 43 second-half points, including nine of its final 13. Sawyer added eight points and sophomore forward **Bill Roveto (South Windsor)** six in the second half, with Willis and Kohn each grabbing four rebounds to help the Warriors to a 19-11 advantage on the boards over the final 20 minutes. Eastern shot 54.8 per cent in the second half, Trinity just 36.0.

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Trinity had built a 45-32 lead at the half, shooting 59.3 percent from the field and sinking five out of seven tries from three-point land, and all eight of its free throw attempts. Paul Rowe, Westbrooks and MacDougall each had 10 points at the break for the Bantams.

Willis enjoyed his finest game in an Eastern uniform. Making his first start at point guard in place of injured sophomore **Courtney Simmons (Middletown)**, just missed recording a triple-double. He had career-highs in points (11), rebounds (10) and assists (9), and turned the ball over only twice in a career-high 36 minutes. . Kohn scored 14 points, Sawyer 13.

Trinity featured five players standing 6-foot-7 or taller. No Eastern player is taller than 6-foot-5.

Ford led the Bantams in scoring with 16 points, while Rowe and sophomore guard Salah Abdo each had 15 points, and MacDougall and Westbrooks 10 points apiece. MacDougall grabbed a team-high six rebounds and Rowe dished out five assists

Eastern had lost three straight and five of six to Trinity, including last year's 85-77 loss in the finals of the Trinity College Classic in early January. Eastern scored the final seven points of the game in its most recent win over Trinity at Hartford, during the 2002/03 season.

Eastern hosts Connecticut College Sunday at 3 p.m. at Francis E. Geissler Gymnasium.

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Sunday, Nov. 30, 2008

EASTERN M-BASKETBALL ERASES TEN-POINT DEFICIT, BUT LOSES
Connecticut College scores final nine points of overtime to post 83-78 victory over Warriors

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. – The Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team came from ten points back and had a chance to win in the final seconds of regulation before finally dropping an 83-78 overtime non-conference decision to Connecticut College Sunday afternoon at Francis E. Geissler Gymnasium.

Even though Eastern (3-3) wiped out a ten-point deficit in the opening minutes of the second half, had a chance to end the game in the final seconds of regulation, and scored the first four points of overtime, the Warriors could not put Conn College (3-2) away.

In overtime, Conn freshman forward Demetrius Porter (Virginia Beach, VA) played a key role in the Camels' victory. He set up a three-pointer by freshman guard Eddie McGuinness (Pearl River, NY) by grabbing the rebound of a missed free throw that allowed Conn to tie the score at 78-all, then came up with a steal that set up an inside basket by senior swingman Ulises Veras (Lawrence, MA) that gave the Camels the lead for good, 80-78, with a minute left in overtime.

After Eastern scored the first four points of overtime on baskets by freshman center **Jeremy Thompson (Berlin)** and junior guard **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford)** – both players having coming off the bench in the game --Conn ended the game on a 9-0 run.

On its final six possessions over the final two minutes of overtime, Eastern missed five shots from the floor and turned the ball over once. Trailing 80-78, Eastern missed a drive to the basket that was rebounded by freshman guard **Nick Nedwick (Irvington, NY)** with 40 seconds left. The Warriors then missed a hurried three-point attempt as the shot clock was winding down, and senior guard Billy Karis (Potsdam, NY) sank the second of two free throws to give the visitors an 81-78 lead with 20 seconds left.

Conn held Eastern without a field goal for nearly a five-minute stretch in the opening minutes of the second half in turning a one-point halftime lead into a ten-point bulge, 53-43 lead. Trailing by nine seven minutes into the second half, Eastern began chipping away and finally tied the score at 64-all with five minutes left on a seven-point run. Sophomore center **Broderick Sawyer (Norwalk)** scored

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five straight points with a conventional three-point play and another inside bucket 30 seconds later, and after Conn missed four straight shots – the first three coming from three-point range – Sawyer found junior point guard **Jared Willis (New Britain)** cutting to the basket for a hoop with tied the game at 64.

Porter's inside basket put Conn back in front, 74-72, with two minutes left, but Willis tied the game again with a driving basket with 30 seconds later. With Eastern pressing the length of the court, sophomore forward **Bill Roveto (South Windsor)** knocked down a Conn pass and Eastern recovered with 28.7 seconds left. After calling time out, Eastern inbounded in front of its own bench, but Conn finally pressured the Warriors into an off-balance, unsuccessful 18-footer at the buzzer that forced overtime.

Ortiz led five Eastern double-digit scorers with 16 points, and also added five rebounds and four steals. Roveto and Sawyer each had 12 and freshman forward **Jamie Kohn (Columbia)** and Nedwick ten each. Roveto helped Eastern to a +6 advantage on the boards by grabbing a team-high seven. Sawyer scored all but one of his points after the break when he sank five of seven field goals.

Karis led the Camels with a game-high 19 points, Porter adding 15 (6-for-9 from the floor and 3-for-3 from the line) and Veras (4-for-5 from the floor) and junior guard Shavar Bernier (Dover, NH) 11 each. Karis collected four of Conn's 11 three-point field goals. Bernier led Conn with seven rebounds and Porter following with six.

After going 8-for-12 from three-point range in the first half, the Warriors missed all eight of their three-point tries after the break.

Eastern hosts Plymouth State University in its Little East Conference opener Saturday at 3 p.m.

little east conference

Saturday, Dec. 6, 2008

TEN-POINT RUN LIFTS PLYMOUTH OVER EASTERN, 71-59

In LEC opener, Warriors held scoreless from floor for ten minutes in second half

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. -- Post player Tom Dowd and guard Jason O'Keefe keyed a run of ten straight Plymouth State University points midway through the second half that helped the Panthers snap a three-game losing streak at the hands of the Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team in a 71-59 Little East Conference victory Saturday afternoon at Francis E. Geissler Gymnasium.

Plymouth (3-4, 1-0 little east) ends a two-game losing streak while Eastern (3-4, 0-1 little east) lost its third straight at home.

With the score tied at 47-all, Dowd completed a three-point play with a free throw, and O'Keefe followed by sinking a three-pointer and dropping in consecutive layups around and Eastern turnover to give Plymouth a 57-47 lead with 6:20 left. Dowd set up O'Keefe's three-point field goal in that stretch with a defensive rebound. O'Keefe then stole the ball and went in alone for his second bucket in that run, and Dowd's pass set up O'Keefe for his third basket that made it 57-47.

During a 17-8 run over ten minutes in the second half, Plymouth held Eastern without a field goal. The Warriors scored their eight points on 12 free throw tries in that span. After junior guard **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford)** connected on a jumper to tie the game at 45-all with 10:08 left, Eastern did not convert from the floor against until sophomore center **Broderick Sawyer (Norwalk)** scored in the paint with two minutes left that made it 62-55, Plymouth.

Eastern outscored Plymouth 15-4 over the final eight minutes of the first half that turned a five-point deficit into a six-point, 31-25 halftime lead. Ortiz's second three-pointer in as many first-half attempts with a minute left in the half provided the Warriors with their halftime lead.

The six-point halftime lead quickly swelled to a game-high ten two minutes into the second half when freshman guard **Nick Nedwick (Irvington, NY)** canned his only three-pointer of the game on the Warriors' first shot after the break, and freshman center **Jeremy Thompson (Berlin)** hit two free throws after being fouled while grabbing

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Nedwick's miss. In less than two minutes, however, Plymouth chopped the lead to one when the visitors turned two Eastern misses and a turnover into a pair of inside field goals by Dowd, a three-pointer by Tracy, and a jumper by Matt Feehan that made it a one-point game with 16 minutes to go. Dowd's short jumper with 7:27 left snapped the eighth tie of the game and gave Plymouth the lead for good, 49-47.

In all, Plymouth outscored Eastern 31-11 to transform the Warriors' comfortable ten-cushion lead into an insurmountable ten-point deficit with six minutes left.

O'Keefe, Dowd and Bryan Tracy combined for 34 of Plymouth's 46 second-half points and ten of 22 rebounds. Tracy was 6-for-6 from the stripe after intermission, and Dowd was 4-for-6 from the floor in scoring all 11 of his points in the second half before fouling out with Plymouth leading by eight points with 2:33 left.

Eastern's starting inside duo of Sawyer and Thompson dominated play for Eastern. Sawyer finished with a career-high 17 points while Thompson had his first double-double with 12 points and a season-high 13 rebounds. Junior guard **Jared Willis (New Britain)** handed out six assists and contributed five steals.

O'Keefe led all scorers with 22 points (8-for-13 from the floor), with Tracy scoring 20 and Dowd 11. Guard Ben Huntington, Plymouth's top scorer with a 17.5 scoring average, was held scoreless from the floor (0-for-4) but contributed seven rebounds. All five of his points came from the foul line.

Eastern hosts Bridgewater State College Tuesday at 7 p.m.

little east conference

Tuesday, December 9, 2008

BENCH ANSWERS CALL FOR EASTERN M-BASKETBALL

Warrior bench players outscore Bridgewater non-starters 59-10 to spark win

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. – Guards **Courtney Simmons (Middletown)** and **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford)** combined for 43 points, 14 rebounds and five steals off the bench and the Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team shot 58 percent from the floor in a 94-77 non-conference victory over Bridgewater State College Tuesday night at Francis E. Geissler Gymnasium.

In the first meeting between the programs in 14 years, Eastern (4-4) ended a three-game home losing streak in stopping Bridgewater State's (5-2) two-game winning streak.

Eastern's bench players outscored Bridgewater's non-starters 24-2 in the first half to help the Warriors to a five-point, 41-36 halftime lead. Ortiz ignited a 53-point second half with 17 points (4-for-6 from three-point range), and Simmons tossed in ten as the Warriors connected on nearly 70 percent (69.7) of their second-half shots. The majority of Eastern's baskets came off transition and came in the paint.

The 58 per cent shooting from the floor represented a season high, the eight three-pointers equaled their most in a game, and the 40-29 rebounding advantage marked the seventh time in eight games that the Warriors have outrebounded their opponent. Eastern does not have a starter standing taller than 6-foot-5.

In all, Eastern's non-starters outscored Bridgewater's non-starters 59-10. Ortiz, a junior, had a game and season-high 26 points, Simmons, a sophomore, 17, junior guard **Jared Willis (New Britain)** 16, sophomore post player **Broderick Sawyer (Norwalk)** 13, and freshman post player **Jeremy Thompson (Berlin)** ten off the bench.

The 16 points were a career-high for Willis, the point guard, as were his ten assists. He also contributed seven rebounds and five steals. Backcourt partners Ortiz and Simmons matched Willis with seven rebounds each.

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Sophomore forward Nicholas Motta led Bridgewater with 23 points (9 for-11 from the line), sophomore guard Judah Jackson adding 16 points and senior forward Roland Millien 12. Bridgewater's top scorer and rebounder this year with averages of 20.8 and 11.2, respectively, Millien was held to four points and four rebounds in the first half.

The Bears stayed within striking distance in the first half by canning 20 of 22 free throws, and finished with a 23-6 advantage from the stripe in the game. Bridgewater missed 13 of 15 three-point field goals, however, and Eastern amassed an 88-54 scoring advantage from the floor. Ortiz was 6-for-9 from three-point range.

Last Tuesday, Bridgewater had beaten UMass Dartmouth, 89-87. The Corsairs were ranked No. 20 nationally and had won the regular season in the Little East Conference a year ago. The Bears had also played 2007/08 LEC post-season tournament champion Rhode Island College to a six-point road loss No. 25.

Eastern returns to Little East Conference play Saturday at the University of Massachusetts Boston at 3 p.m.

little east conference

Saturday, Dec. 13, 2008

EASTERN M-BASKETBALL STARTS FAST, WHIPS UMB, 73-53
For Warriors, all 15 players see time in Little East Conference victory

BOSTON, Mass. The Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team scored 12 of the game's first 15 points and was never headed in posting a 73-53 Little East Conference victory over the University of Massachusetts Boston Saturday afternoon at the Clark Athletic Center.

All 15 players on the roster saw time for Eastern (5-4, 1-1 little east), which shot 50 percent in the first half and forced 30 turnovers in the game en route to its third straight win and fourth in the last five meetings with UMass (2-7, 0-2 little east)

Leading by 13 at halftime, the Warriors got out fast again to start the second half. Eastern outscored UMass 17-7 over the first seven minutes of the second half to build a 23-point, 53-30 advantage.

Freshmen **Nick Nedwick (Irvington, NY)** and **Jamie Kohn (Columbia)** led a balanced Eastern attack, with junior guard **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford)** and sophomore point guard **Courtney Simmons (Middletown)** also recording double-digits in points coming off the bench. A guard, Nedwick had a collegiate-high 14 points (6-for-8 from the floor) while Kohn, a forward, had his first double-double with 13 points and a collegiate-high 12 rebounds. He also added five assists. Ortiz dropped in 12 points and Simmons ten.

Eastern returns to action Jan. 2-3 at the University of New England Invitational. The Warriors face the University of Maine-Fort Kent Jan. 2 at 5:30 p.m. in the tourney opener.

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Friday, Jan. 2, 2009

EASTERN MEN'S BASKETBALL RALLIES PAST FORT KENT

Warriors come from 11 down in second half to post 87-84 of victory

BIDDEFORD, Maine – Sophomore guard **Courtney Simmons (Middletown)** and freshman forward **Jamie Kohn (Columbia)** combined for 34 points after the break to spark the Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team from 11 points down to an 87-84 overtime victory over the University of Maine at Fort Kent Friday night in the opening round of the Jim Beaudry Classic, hosted by the University of New England at the Campus Center.

Trailing by 11 points with 11 minutes left in the game, Eastern (6-4) outscored Fort Kent (5-6) 28-17 the rest of the way to tie the game at 75-all and force overtime. The Warriors never trailed in overtime, getting a baseline jumper from sophomore center **Broderick Sawyer (Norwalk)** to open the overtime session. Simmons then scored on a driving layup off a steal and pass by Kohn, then got his own rebound and converted a three-point play to give Eastern an 82-77 lead. Kohn got the roll on a jumper with 1:14 left in overtime to push the lead to six, 84-78 and the Warriors went on to win their third straight and improve their record away from home this season to 4-1. Fort Kent had a three-game winning streak snapped.

Eastern advances to the final Saturday at 3 p.m. against the winner of Friday's second semifinal between host New England and Suffolk University.

Kohn had eight points and Simmons six to rally Eastern from its 11-point deficit and pull even at the end of regulation. Kohn hit a jumper and Simmons a driving layup on a steal and pass from junior guard **Jared Willis (New Britain)** to push the Warriors into a 74-73 lead with 47.3 seconds left in regulation. Willis' free throw made it 75-73 with 16 seconds left, but the Bengals forced overtime when Jimmy Lopez sank two game-tying free throws with 9.5 seconds left. Simmons couldn't convert a potential game-winning drive to the basket at the end of regulation.

Simmons, who played only five minutes and took only one shot in the first half, was 8-for-14 with six rebounds and no turnovers in 26 minutes after the break. Kohn had 14 points (6-for-12 from the floor) and four rebounds after the break. Willis had only six points in the game but handed out a career-high 11 assists and came up with five steals and committed only three turnovers in 42 minutes.

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Simmons finished with a season-high 22 points (two shy of his career best) and no turnovers in 26 points. Kohn finished with 20 – two shy of his season high – to go along with seven rebounds and three steals.

Freshman center **Jeremy Thompson (Berlin)** had 11 points and seven rebounds in the second half before fouling out with Eastern leading 73-72 with 1:10 left in regulation. Thompson recorded his second double-double in four games with 19 points and ten rebounds in the game. Seven of his points came from the foul line.

There were eight lead changes and four ties in the first half before Fort Kent used a 20-8 run over the final seven minutes of the first half to take a ten-point lead into halftime.

Lopez entered the game averaging 18.8 points and shooting 53.0 percent from three-point range, 51.6 percent from the floor overall and perfect on 18 free throws. He had only seven points in the first half but finished with a game-high 25 points. He was 6-for-6 from the floor in the second half, but missed three of eight free throws, two coming when Thompson fouled out with 1:10 left. Lopez also turned the ball over nine times, thanks in large part to the defense of Willis.

Led by Willis, Eastern forced 31 turnovers by collecting 15 steals. The turnovers offset Fort Kent's game shooting percentage of nearly 60 percent (58.9), many of its buckets coming on uncontested layups.

The game was the first for both teams in three weeks, as the club combined to miss 25 of 54 free throws.

little east conference

Saturday, Jan. 3, 2008

EASTERN M-BASKETBALL DROPS UNE TITLE GAME, 74-68

Poor FT shooting costly as Warriors lose Beaudry Classic championship game

BIDDEFORD, Maine -- The University of New England men's basketball team held Eastern Connecticut State University at bay with timely three-point shooting in the second half, then sank 12 of its final 14 free throws over the final four minutes to post a 74-68 victory in the championship game of its own Jim Beaudry Classic Saturday afternoon at the Campus Center.

The win is the seventh straight for New England (8-3) and stops Eastern's (6-5) three-game winning streak. The Warriors lost in a tournament title game for the third time this year, losing on the road for only the second time in six games this season.

With Eastern threatening to pull away in the second half, New England nailed all four of its second-half three-pointers in a six-minute stretch, the final one pulling the hosts even, 60-60, with 3:29 left. The hosts scored their next four points and 12 of their final 14 from the foul line to pull away for the win.

As it did in Friday's 87-84 overtime win over Maine at Fort Kent, Eastern was forced to play come-from-behind against New England. The Nor'easters scored six straight points to break from a 13-all tie midway through the first half and connected on five of six free throws in the final three minutes of the half to take a nine-point, 37-28 lead into the lockerroom -- their largest lead of the game.

Trailing by six with nine minutes left, the Warriors put together a seven-point streak to move into a one-point, 54-53 lead with six minutes left. Sophomore center **Broderick Sawyer** (Norwalk) keyed the run by dropping in a driving layup on an assist from sophomore guard **Courtney Simmons** (Middletown), and later blocked a shot that set up an inside hoop by senior guard **Saliym Wilson** (Manhattan) at the other end of the floor that gave the Warriors their one-point lead.

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For the second tournament game, Eastern faltered at the free throw line. The Warriors missed 12 of 20 attempts against New England after missing 11 of 28 in Friday's first-round win. In two tournament games, Eastern was 25-for-48 from the foul line and 8-for-37 from three-point range.

After playing only 14 minutes Friday, sophomore center Sawyer led Eastern Saturday with a game-high 17 points and added five rebounds and two blocked shots. He was 8-for-10 from the floor.

Simmons and **Jared Willis (New Britain)** represented Eastern on the all-tournament team. In two games, Simmons had 28 points, 14 rebounds and eight assists. Willis had 13 points, 16 assists and ten rebounds. In the tournament, freshman post player **Jeremy Thompson (Berlin)** added 23 points and 11 rebounds and freshman forward **Jamie Kohn (Coventry)** team-highs of 32 points and 15 rebounds. Kohn converted 14 of 25 field goals in two games.

Eastern visits Union College Wednesday at 7 p.m.

little east conference

Thursday, Jan. 9, 2009

EASTERN'S BENCH ANSWERS THE CALL AGAINST UNION

In non-conference loss, non-starters team in second half to cut 18 point deficit to five

SCHENECTADY, N.Y. -- Senior guard **Michael Brady (Southbury)** led a second-half charge that twice whittled an 18-point deficit to five before the Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team dropped a 67-53 non-conference decision to Union College Thursday evening at Viniar Athletic Center.

With Eastern (6-6) trailing by 18 points four minutes into the second half, Brady and fellow non-starters **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford)**, **Nick Nedwick (Irvington, NY)**, **Hamilton Levy (Woodbury)** and **Mark Borysewicz (Coventry)** led an Eastern assault that pulled the Warriors to within striking distance with eight minutes left.

With Ortiz regaining his three-point touch and the Warriors forcing 12 second-half turnovers, Eastern outscored Union (7-3) 21-8 over nine minutes, limiting the Dutchmen to just four points from the floor over a stretch.

With seven minutes left, Brady stole the ball and fed Nedwick for a transition layup that cut Union's lead to 50-45. Union missed shots on its next three possessions but the Warriors couldn't capitalize on their opportunities to get to within a bucket. Drew Goldstein grabbed the rebound of his own miss and put it back in for Union's first field goal in four minutes, and after an Eastern miss at the other end, Matt Covucci scored in the paint as the hosts re-gained a nine-point cushion with 4:30 left.

Trailing by nine, the Warriors made one last run. **Kris Johnson (Sturbridge, MA)** came off the bench to sink a corner three-pointer and Levy a transition three-pointer soon after to help the Warriors back to within six with three minutes left, but Union answered with a three-point field goal and conventional three-point play to push the Dutchmen lead to 12 with 1:50 left.

(more)

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While Eastern struggled through an 0-for-12 showing from three-point range in the first half, Union offset 12 turnovers in the stanza by shooting 51.9 percent from the floor to take an eight-point, 32-24 lead into the lockerroom. The Dutchmen quickly pushed their lead to 18 by scoring the first ten points of the second half, with Goldstein capping the early burst with his only three-point field goal of the game.

As has been the case throughout the season, ineffective shooting from the foul line hindered Eastern throughout. The Warriors missed eight of 12 tries from the stripe, including all four in the second half.

While Eastern turned to its bench to provide the spark, Union got virtually all of its production from its starters. None of Union's three reserves contributed a point in 21 minutes. Drew Desmarais and Steve Madej each had 18 points, with Goldstein adding 12 and Joey Lokitis 11. Desmarais and Madej combined on 14-for-24 shooting from the floor and were 4-for-5 from the stripe. Desmarais led Union to a +14 advantage on the boards by grabbing a game and career-high 16. Goldstein handed out eight assists and grabbed five rebounds.

Eastern's seven reserves combined for 36 of the team's 53 points, ten rebounds, 11 assists and six steals.

Ortiz scored all 16 of his points in the second half for Eastern, sinking four of eight three-pointers that pulled him to within two of tying the program record of 156 three-point field goals. In a career-tying 13 minutes -- all in the second half -- Brady had five assists and two steals. Eastern outscored Union by three points from behind the three-point arc, but needed 20 more attempts to do so.

Eastern visits the University of Southern Maine Saturday at 3 p.m. in a Little East Conference contest.

little east conference

Saturday, Jan. 10, 2009

EASTERN M-BASKETBALL STARTS FAST, POSTS LEC WIN, 89-74
Against Southern Maine, sophomores Simmons and Sawyer combine for 40 points

GORHAM, Maine -- Sophomores **Courtney Simmons** (Middletown) and **Broderick Sawyer** (Norwalk) combined for 40 points and the Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team never trailed in posting an 89-74 Little East Conference men's basketball victory over the University of Southern Maine Saturday afternoon at the Warren Hill Gymnasium.

The win is the fourth in the last six games for Eastern (7-6, 2-1 little east), which was swept by Southern Maine (3-10, 0-3 little east) in last year's two regular-season conference games. Both teams entered play Saturday having lost two in a row.

Simmons, who totaled only ten points in the team's last two losses, led Eastern with 21 points while Sawyer, who scored only two points in a Thursday loss, totaled a career-high 19. Sawyer scored all of his points in the first 30 minutes of play, while Simmons divided his team virtually evenly between both halves. The pair converted 16 of 26 field goals.

"We came out ready to play today, mentally and physically," noted Eastern head coach **Bill Geitner** afterward of the Warriors, who improved to 5-3 away from home this year. "We got off to a good start and shot the ball very, very well -- something that we have struggled with all year. I was apprehensive coming into this game, because Southern Maine is a very talented team. We knew that we were going to have to compete for 40 minutes."

In all, five players totaled double figures for Eastern, which shot a season-high 61.3 percent after failing to shoot better than 45 percent in seven of its first 12 games. Eastern equaled its best three-point shooting of the season, matching its season-opening 7-for-13 (.538) performance against Berkely College. The Warriors entered the game shooting just .291 from three-point range, including a mark of .218 in their last four. This year, Eastern is 3-1 in games where it has taken less than 15 threes.

Simmons was 7-for-12 from from the floor (3-for-4 on threes) and sank all four of his free throws. He also had six rebounds and five assists. Freshman forward **Jamie Kohn** (Columbia) added 15 points (7-for-11 from the floor) and a game -high eight rebounds

(more)

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for Eastern, with freshman guard **Nick Nedwick (Irvington, NY)** and junior guard **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford)** chipping in ten points each. Ortiz was 5-for-7 from the floor, 5-for-5 from two-point range.

The 5-foot-10 inch Simmons and 6-foot-5 inch Sawyer sparked a 17-7 scoring spurt over the final six minutes of the first half that helped Eastern pull away from the only tie of the game and take a ten-point, 46-36 lead into the lockerroom. In that burst, Sawyer and Simmons each had six points. Eastern had scored the first seven points of the game (Simmons scoring the first five) before the Huskies rallied behind nine points from junior forward Greg Whitaker to pull even for the only time, 29-29.

After Southern Maine made its final push to cut the Eastern lead to seven with 2:07 left, Kohn hit a jumper with one second left on the shot clock, and Ortiz stole the ball and took it in to score to push the lead back to 11, 83-72, with 1:11 left.

Whitaker, first-year junior guard Andy Tracy, and freshman forward Sean Bergeron combined to score 58 of the points for the Huskies, who feature nine newcomers on their 13-player roster. Whitaker led both teams with 23 points and also added six rebounds, while Tracy had 18 points and six rebounds and Bergeron 17 points.

Eastern plays the first of three straight home conference games Tuesday, hosting defending IFC regular-season champion UMass Dartmouth at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 17, 2009

RHODE ISLAND M-HOOP PULLS AWAY FROM EASTERN, 67-56
Anchormen score ten straight points late in game to post Little East victory

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. - Sophomore forward Darius Debnam (Mattapan, MA) sparked a run of ten straight Rhode Island College points over a four-minute stretch late in the game that carried the Anchormen to a 67-56 Little East Conference victory over Eastern Connecticut State University Saturday evening at Francis E. Geissler Gymnasium.

The two-time defending LEC tournament champions, Rhode Island (10-4, 4-1 little east) broke from a tie with eight minutes left in the game by scoring ten straight points, as Eastern (7-8, 2-3 little east) missed four shots and turned the ball over four times on eight points in that stretch that allowed the Anchormen to surge into a 61-51 lead with three minutes left.

In that 10-0 run, Debnam had four rebounds and a steal and contributed the final three points of the spurt. Freshman forward Mason Choice (Newport, RI) converted two inside buckets in that ten-point run, and sophomore guard Antone Gray (Providence, RI) swished his only three-point field goal of the game. Debnam and Choice both came off the bench in the game.

Rhode Island forced 11 second-half Eastern turnovers with eight steals, and turned them into 13 points.

A winner of five of its last six, Rhode Island got a team-high 18 points from senior guard Bobby Bailey (Fall River, MA), who also had seven rebounds. Gray had 15 points, four rebounds and three assists. Eight of his points came from the free throw line (seven in the second half). Debnam came off the bench for nine points and a game-high 12 rebounds that helped RIC to a nine-point advantage on the boards.

Eastern sophomore guard **Courtney Simmons (Middletown)** tied his season-high with 22 points and added a team-high seven rebounds, freshman forward **Jamie Kohn (Columbia)** adding 11 points and junior guard **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford)** chipping in ten. Ortiz' second three-point field goal of the game with 11:48 left made him the program's all-time leader with 157 three-pointers.

With the win, Rhode Island keeps pace among the LEC leaders. The Anchormen are tied for second place with Keene State, a game behind UMass Dartmouth. Eastern shares fifth place in the eight-team conference with Western Connecticut, which edged the University of Southern Maine, 80-77 Saturday in Danbury.

The loss is Eastern's fourth in its last five games and drops the Warriors to 2-5 this year at home.

Eastern hosts Western Connecticut State University Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.

little east conference

Tuesday, Jan. 20, 2009

LONG-RANGE SHOOTING LIFTS WESTERN OVER EASTERN, 80-75

In men's basketball, Colonials can ten of 15 three-pointers in Little East victory

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. – Western Connecticut State University outscored Eastern Connecticut State University by 21 points from three-point range in sending the Warriors to their third straight loss, 80-75, in Little East Conference men's basketball action Tuesday night at Francis E. Geissler Gymnasium.

Senior guard Dewayne Dickens had a game-high 25 points and junior guard Tyshawn Gillespie came off the bench for 17 points to power Western (8-6, 3-3 little east) to its third straight win and hand Eastern (7-9, 2-4 little east) its third straight conference home loss and fifth setback in the last six games. The Warriors drop to 2-6 at Geissler Gym this year.

Three of Western's four second-half three-pointers came in a span of just over a minute. Western scored eight straight points to wipe out a six-point Eastern lead and take a 64-62 lead with eight minutes left. Dickens swished a three-pointer on a pass from Gillespie, then hit an inside basket before Gillespie hit his own three-point to give the Colonials the two-point lead.

Two free throws by Eastern sophomore guard **Courtney Simmons (Middletown)** tied the game for the 14th time, 74-74 with two minutes left, but Eastern missed five shots and turned the ball over once on its final seven possessions, managing only a free throw in that span. Senior guard Dashon Jennings gave Western the lead for good with his third three-pointer of the game with 1:30 left, and Gillespie swished three free throws down the stretch.

In all, Western outscored Eastern by 21 points from three-point range, sinking ten of 15 in the game. From three-point range, Dickens connected on all four of his tries, and Jennings on each of his three.

Eastern freshman guard **Nick Nedwick (Irvington, NY)** converted his first eight shots of the game and finished 9-for-14 from the floor on the way to a career-high 19 points and

(more)

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career-high seven rebounds. Nedwick's eighth straight field goal gave Eastern a three-point lead five minutes into the second half. He did not miss a shot until clanging a three-point try a minute later with the Warriors clinging to a one-point, 50-49 lead.

Behind Nedwick (7-for-7), Eastern shot 60.0 percent from the floor in the first half. The Warriors led by as many as seven points in the half but came up with only six points over the final six minutes of the stanza and led by only one at the break.

Ranked second in the LEC in field goal percentage, sophomore post player **Broderick Sawyer (Norwalk)** muscled in eight of 12 field goals and finished with 17 points – just two shy of his career-high. Sawyer grabbed seven rebounds, as did freshman forward **Hamilton Levy (Woodbury)**. Levy's total represented a career-high and helped the Warriors to a slim 36-35 advantage in that department. Simmons added 11 points.

Eastern looks for a split of its home-and-home conference regular-season series with Plymouth State University Saturday at 3 p.m. The Panthers defeated Eastern, 71-59, Dec. 6 at Geissler Gym.

little east conference

Saturday, January 24, 2009

BEHIND ORTIZ, EASTERN M-BASKETBALL ENDS SKID, 74-66
Warriors start strong, regain shooting touch from foul line in victory over Plymouth

PLYMOUTH, NH -- Junior guard Edwin Ortiz (Hartford) scored 19 of his team-high 22 points in the second half to help the Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team protect a 13-point halftime lead and record a 74-66 Little East Conference victory over Plymouth State University Saturday afternoon at Foley Gymnasium.

Eastern (8-9, 3-4 little east) snaps a three-game (conference) losing streak with its fourth win over Plymouth (7-10, 4-3 little east) in the last six meetings, avenging a 12-point loss to the Panthers in its conference-opener in early December. The Warriors regain a share of fifth place in the eight-team conference -- one game behind Plymouth for fourth place. The top four teams host first-round tournament games Feb. 24.

Making his first start of the season in two months, Ortiz converted seven of ten field goals in the second, sinking three of four from three-point range as he scored nearly half (19 of 42) of the Warriors points after the break. Ortiz is the program leader for three-pointers in a season and career, upping his career total to 162 and moving to within 11 points of 900 in his career.

The worst free-throw shooting team in the conference, Eastern set a season best for made free throws (22-for-29) and its FT percentage of 75.9 was its second-best of the year.

The Warriors never trailed after the first three minutes -- opening the game with a 14-4 scoring run -- and took a double-digit lead midway through the first half. Eastern took its first double-digit lead eight minutes into the contest, maintained the advantage the rest of the half and took its 13-point margin into the break. Eastern held Plymouth to 19 first-half points on 30.0 percent field goal shooting over the first 20 minutes. Eastern connected on nine of 11 free throws in the half.

(more)

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The Warriors scored six of the first eight points of the second half to build their largest lead of the afternoon, 38-21, and Plymouth could get no closer than ten points until there were just two minutes left in the game.

Plymouth's comeback attempt came up short as the Panthers made just 3-of-20 attempts from three-point range and missed a chance to win consecutive games for the first time this season. Plymouth cut a 17-point second-half deficit to nine with 38 seconds left and missed four consecutive three-pointers in the final 15 seconds after pulling to within eight.

Sophomore guard **Courtney Simmons (Middletown)** had 15 points, with sophomore forward **Bill Roveto (South Windsor)** adding ten points, five rebounds and three assists. Roveto was 6-for-8 from the foul line. Sophomore forward **Broderick Sawyer (Norwalk)** led Eastern with six rebounds before fouling out with less than a minute left. Freshman forward **Jeremy Thompson (Berlin)** had fouled out with two minutes left in a game which featured 53 fouls and 55 free throw attempts.

In Plymouth's 12-point win over Eastern earlier this year, the Warriors shot just 36.0 percent from the floor. Ortiz managed only eight points in that game and Simmons was held to one point in 13 minutes after returning from an injury. Both players came off the bench in that game.

Junior forward Mike Cherrey of Plymouth led all scorers with 24 points for after making 9-of-13 shots from the field. Classmate Junior guard Jason O'Keefe added 15 points, despite going 0-for-5 from three-point range, and junior forward Bryan Tracy contributed 12 points. O'Keefe also collected a game-high nine rebounds and Cherrey grabbed seven as Plymouth won the battle on the boards by a 35-29 count.

Eastern visits Keene State College Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.

little east conference

Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2009

TEAM EFFORT LIFTS KEENE M-BASKETBALL OVER EASTERN

Owls' four double-figure scorers overcome Simmons' career-high 27 points

KEENE, N.H. -- Eastern Connecticut State University sophomore guard **Courtney Simmons (Middletown)** scored a career-high 27 points but proved to be a one-man gang against Keene State College's top four players as the Owls captured a 73-63 Little East Conference men's basketball decision Tuesday night at Spaulding Gymnasium.

The win is the fourth in the last six outings for Keene (10-8/6-2 little east) following a four-game losing streak and is the fourth straight for the Owls over Eastern (8-10/3-5 little east). The conference loss was Eastern's first on the road after three victories this year but the setback is the Warriors' sixth in their last eight outings.

The top four teams in the conference all won games Tuesday night against the second-division clubs. Keene remains a game behind LEC co-leaders Massachusetts Dartmouth and Rhode Island College, while Eastern remains locked in a two-way tie for fifth place with Western Connecticut State University. The top four finishers in the final conference standings host first-round LEC tournament games Feb. 24.

After trailing by 13 points midway through the first half, Eastern outscored the hosts 24-10 the rest of the way to assume its first lead since the opening minute, 31-30 at halftime. Led by 6-foot-5 inch senior Tyler Kathan -- a returning first-team all-conference forward -- the Owls broke quickly in the second half, however. Kathan had seven early points that helped Keene score 11 of the first 13 points of the second half to move out to an eight-point, 41-33 lead two-and-a-half minutes into the second half.

Simmons capped a modest 7-2 Eastern run with an inside basket that cut the Keene lead to three, 43-40 five minutes into the second half, but Kathan set up three straight Keene baskets with two defensive rebounds of Eastern misses and an assist that pushed the Owl lead back to nine, 49-40 with 13 minutes left. The Warriors were unable to get closer than six the rest of the way.

Simmons (4-for-7 from three-point range) was 11-for-23 against Keene to exceed his previous game scoring high by three points en route to his game-high scoring total. Only junior guard **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford)** joined Simmons in double figures, however. Ortiz netted 12 points, collecting his 900th career point in the process.

(more)

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Simmons, who has scored at least 20 points in three of the last six games, also had five rebounds, four assists and three steals.

Eastern was able to limit two Keene starters to a total of only four points, but Kathan led four double-figure scorers with 21 points and also teamed with freshman forward Cody Snow for 24 rebounds. Kathan had 14 rebounds and Snow ten as the hosts outrebounded Eastern by 11. Kathan, Snow, and 6-foot-6 inch senior forward Nate Anderson connected on 20 of 35 field goals (57.1 percent).

Eastern hosts Massachusetts Boston Saturday at 3 p.m., aiming for a sweep of the home-and-home regular-season series. The Beacons are winless in eight LEC games this season.

MOLTA, Bob (Athletics)

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Sent: Tuesday, January 27, 2009 10:15 PM
To: news@keenesentinel.com; sports@unionleader.com; Staton, Jamie F; sports@cmonitor.com; sports@vnews.com; sports@wmur.com; sports@bostonherald.com; sports@globe.com; sports@bfp.burlingtonfreepress.com; sports@rutlandherald.com; sports@recorder.com; boblund@weei935.com; Litchstop@aol.com
Cc: MOLTA, Bob (Athletics)
Subject: Keene State men's basketball: Keene State 73 Eastern Conn. 63

KEENE STATE COLLEGE MEN'S BASKETBALL
Owls defeat Warriors 73-63

KEENE, N.H. 1/27/09 – Senior forward Tyler Kathan (Ludlow, Vt.) scored 17 of his team high 21 points in the second half and pulled down 14 rebounds and freshman forward Cody Snow (Leyden, Mass.) registered his first double-double of his career (12 points and 10 rebounds) to lead the Keene State men's basketball team to a 73-63 Little East Conference victory over Eastern Conn. State University at Spaulding Gym on Tuesday night.

With the win, KSC improves to 10-8 (6-2 LEC) and remain third in the LEC standings. Eastern falls to 8-10 (3-5 LEC).

The Owls went up 20-7 midway in the first half when Kathan fed freshman forward Cody Snow (Leyden, Mass.) for a slam.

The Warriors came back to outscore the Owls 15-2 over the next 4:25 to pull within two points (24-22) on consecutive lay-ups off the break by sophomore guard Courtney Simmons (Middletown, Conn.) with 5:55 to go.

A put-back by Simmons, who had 11 first half points, gave ECSU a 31-30 halftime lead.

Keene State went inside out of the break, using an 11-2 run capped by a lay-up by senior Nate Anderson (Westminster, Mass.) to pull ahead 41-33 at the 17:30 mark.

The Warriors would cut the lead back to three points (43-40) on a drive by Simmons. Minutes later, Kathan grabbed and offensive rebound and scored to give KSC a nine point lead (51-42) at the 12:20 mark.

Snow's second slam of the game, off a feed from Anderson made it a 10 point game and a fall-away shot clock beating lay-up by freshman guard Tavonne Reid (Bridgeport, Conn.) put the Owls up 58-45 with 7:30 to play.

"I just tried to attack the rim a little more tonight," said Snow, who had three dunks in the game. "We're always trying to get the ball inside to Nate and Tyler. When we do that good things happen."

A baseline three-pointer by freshman forward Derek D'Amours (Agawam, Mass.) gave KSC a 61-49 lead with just over six minutes to play.

Anderson had 15 points and Reid finished the game with 11 points for the Owls, who had a 41-30 advantage in rebounding.

Simmons finished with a game high 27 points for the Warriors. Junior guard Edwin Ortiz chipped in with 12 points.

On Saturday, Keene State hosts R.I. College and Eastern entertains UMass-Boston.

Saturday, Jan. 31, 2009

FOR EASTERN M-BASKETBALL, LATE LEAD SLIPS AWAY IN LEC LOSS
Massachusetts Boston snaps 13-game losing streak with help of 19-2 scoring run

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. – Leading by eight points with eight minutes to play, the Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team went scoreless from the field for seven minutes and was outscored 19-2 by the University of Massachusetts Boston in a 75-69 Little East Conference loss Saturday afternoon at Francis E. Geissler Gymnasium.

The loss is the seventh in the last nine outings for Eastern (8-11, 3-6 little east), which is also 2-7 at home this season. UMass (3-16, 1-8 little east) snapped a 13-game overall losing streak and defeated Eastern for the first time after three straight losses. Eastern routed UMass by 20 when the teams met in mid-December at the Clark Athletic Center.

Shooting under 40 percent from the floor this year, UMass shot 55.1 percent from the floor Saturday, including 60.0 percent in the second half when it wiped out an 11-point halftime deficit. In the second half, UMass outscored Eastern by 17 points in the second half, when it outrebounded the Warriors by 16.

The Beacons overcame 27 turnovers in the game, outscoring Eastern 16-3 on second-chance opportunities.

Eastern senior guard **Kris Johnson (Sturbridge, MA)** came off the bench to convert a season-high six three-pointers -- all of them coming in the first half on nine attempts. Johnson, who holds the program record for three-pointers in a game (9), had managed only 15 threes this season. He finished with a season-high 18 points, matching the total of junior guard **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford)**. Both players shot 50 percent from the floor.

Eastern outscored UMass 18-6 over the final six minutes of the first half to take an 11-point, 37-26 advantage into the break. Johnson contributed nine of those points with three three-pointers in four tries. Each of Johnson's first four three-pointers in the game gave Eastern a lead. His fifth bucket from beyond the arc stretched the Warriors' lead to eight with just under two minutes left in the first half, and his final one provided Eastern with its largest lead of the game (13 points) a minute before the half.

Ranked last in the Little East Conference in free throw percentage, Eastern failed to convert at least half of its tries for the seventh time this year, missing 15 of 29 (48.3 percent).

Senior guard A.J. Titus (Roxbury, MA) of UMass led all scorers with 21 points, ten coming on 15 free throw attempts. Titus was 10-for-14 from the stripe in the second half. Sophomore forward Pat Joseph (Queens, NY) added 20 points and junior forward Ernst Jean (Malden, MA) 15. The duo combined to shoot 15-for-24 from the floor. Joseph grabbed a game-high 12 rebounds before fouling out with 44.1 second left, helping UMass outrebound the Warriors by 18.

Eastern hosts Wesleyan University Wednesday at 7 p.m.

Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2008

EASTERN M-BASKETBALL SURGES PAST WESLEYAN, 75-69

Edwin Ortiz (27 points) sparks Eastern to first home win in nearly two months

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. – Junior guard **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford)** sank six three-point field goals – a key one coming with three minutes left – to help lift the Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team to a 75-69 non-conference win over Wesleyan University Wednesday evening at Francis E. Geissler Gymnasium.

The home win is the first for Eastern (9-11) in nearly two months and drops Wesleyan's (6-14) road record to 1-8. Eastern had lost by an identical score Saturday to UMass Boston.

Wednesday, Eastern led by eight with seven minutes, and after the Cardinals pulled to within one, the Warriors went on a critical 9-2 run to build an eight-point, 70-62 lead with 1:19 left. Ortiz drilled his final three-pointer after Wesleyan had pulled to within one, freshman post player **Jeremy Thompson (Berlin)** swished two free throws 40 seconds later, and sophomore guard **Courtney Simmons (Middletown)** hit a 15-foot jumper in the lane to make it 68-61 with 1:39 left. After Thompson converted two free throws to make it 66-61, Ortiz stole the ball to set up Simmons' jumper that made it 68-61 with 1:39 left. With Eastern leading by four with 19 seconds left, Simmons sank two free throws, and Ortiz added a pair with three seconds left to ice the win.

Having struggled all season long at the free throw line (54.8 percent), the Warriors responded Wednesday down the stretch. Beginning with Thompson's two freebies with 2:21 left, Eastern connected on seven of nine the rest of the way to seal the win.

Ortiz led all players with a season-high 27 points and also chipped in seven rebounds to help Eastern to a +10 advantage on the boards. Since returning to the starting lineup over the last four games, Ortiz is averaging 19.8 points and is shooting 51.8 percent from the floor and 46.7 percent from three-point range. His point total moved him to within 54 of 1,000 in his career.

Ortiz was 9-for-17 from the floor (6-for-11 from "three"). Freshman guard **Nick Nedwick (Irvington, NY)** added 14 points (6-for-10 from the floor) and Thompson totaled ten points in ten minutes. He was 4-for-5 from the floor.

(more)

Eastern equaled its third-lowest turnover total of the season with 12.

Wesleyan shot 57.1 percent in the first half – scoring the majority of its points from close range – but trailed by four at the break. Eastern committed only five first-half turnovers, scored 12 points off 11 Wesleyan turnovers, and cashed in with eight second-chance points.

Jason Mendell led Wesleyan with 23 points. He was 8-for-15 from the floor, including 5-for-10 from three-point range. Stan Grayson added 19 points and a team-high seven rebounds. Grayson was 8-for-13 from the floor.

Eastern hosts the University of Southern Maine Saturday at 3 p.m. in a Little East Conference game.

little east conference

Saturday, February 07, 2009

EASTERN M-BASKETBALL COMPLETES SWEEP OF USM, 65-50
In LEC game, Warriors never trail after scoring ten of game's first 12 points

WILLIMANTIC, Conn.— The Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team scored ten of the game's first 12 points and capitalized on 19.2 percent first-half shooting by the University of Southern Maine to post a 65-50 Little East Conference victory Saturday afternoon at Francis E. Geissler Gymnasium.

In losing its fifth straight, Southern Maine (4-17, 1-9 little east) managed only 12 first-half points as it missed 21 of 26 field goals (0-for-8 from three-point range). Eastern (10-11, 4-6 little east) won for the second straight game, completing a regular-season sweep of Southern Maine.

Junior guard **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford)** opened the game with a three-pointer and sophomore guard **Courtney Simmons (Middletown)** capped the game-opening 10-2 run with his only three-pointer of the game four minutes into play.

The Huskies cut a 13-point halftime deficit to six on a three-point field goal by junior guard Andy Tracy (Ellsworth, ME) with nine minutes left, before the Warriors countered with freshman forward **Jamie Kohn's (Columbia)** inside hoop off a pass from freshman forward **Hanilton Levy (Woodbury)**, and a three-point field goal by career three-point field goal leader Ortiz that restored an 11-point lead with eight minutes left.

Eastern's backcourt trio of Ortiz, Simmons, and freshman **Nick Nedwick (Irvington, NY)** were the Warriors' three double-figure scorers. They combined for 36 points, five assists and six steals and evenly divided 15 rebounds.

Ortiz shared game-high scoring honors with 16 points, moving to within 38 of 1,000 points in his three-year career. Since returning to the starting lineup over the last five games, Ortiz is averaging 19.0 points and 3.8 rebounds. He is shooting 50 percent from the floor, including 17-for-37 from three-point range. Simmons and Nedwick each had ten points.

In a starting role, sophomore forward **Bill Roveto (South Windsor)** grabbed seven rebounds. Off the bench, freshman forward **Jeremy Thompson (Berlin)** had his highest

(more)

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rebound total (7) in the past 11 games, helping the Warriors to a +14 advantage in that category.

Four players – three of them starters – scored all of the points for USM, which does not have a senior on the roster. Junior forward Greg Whitaker (Presque Isle, ME) matched Ortiz with 16 points. He was 7-for-10 from the floor. Tracy totaled 12 points and seven rebounds, while freshman guard Mike Poulin (Readfield, ME) had 11 points. Sophomore guard John Sewall (Bath, ME) came off the bench to play 30 minutes and score 11 points.

Eastern visits Western Connecticut State University Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.

little east conference

Tuesday, Feb. 10, 2009

ORTIZ' 28 POINTS CARRIES EASTERN M-BASKETBALL PAST WESTERN

Junior guard scores 18 in second half as Warriors prevail in Little East game, 79-76

DANBURY, Conn. – Junior guard **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford)** scored a season-high 28 points to lift the Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team to a 79-76 Little East Conference decision over Western Connecticut State University Tuesday night at Feldman Arena.

Eastern's (11-11, 5-6 little east) third straight win equals its longest of the year and moves the Warriors to the .500 mark for the first time in three weeks. Western (12-9, 5-6 little east) had a four-game winning streak snapped in losing to the Warriors for the second straight time at home after winning six in a row over Eastern at Feldman Arena.

With Eastern defeating Western and Plymouth State downing homestanding Keene State in overtime Tuesday, four teams contending for the final two first-round home berths in the LEC tournament are now separated by just one game. Keene and Plymouth are 6-5.

Against Western, Eastern scored six straight points to take a 77-73 lead with 15 seconds left. Ortiz contributed three of those points with free throws - the final two coming with six seconds left that rounded out the scoring. The worst free-throw shooting team in the conference, Eastern converted six of eight free throws over the final two minutes and finished with 21 free throws on 28 attempts. The free total was its highest of the year and its 75.0 percent was its third-best of the season.

Western's Daquan Brooks had pulled the Colonials to within one, 77-76, when he sank his only three-point field goal after eight misses with 11 seconds left, but after two timeouts sandwiched around a foul, Ortiz converted two free throws with 15 seconds left to make it a three-point Eastern advantage. Trailing by three points after Ortiz' free throws, Western missed three potential game-tying free throws in the final seconds.

Ortiz, who scored 18 points in the second half, moved to within ten points of 1,000 in his career. He was 8-for-14 from the field (4-for-8 from three-point range) and 8-for-9 from the stripe. Sophomore forward **Bill Roveto (South Windsor)** added 13 points on 5-for-5 shooting from the floor and 3-for-4 shooting from the stripe. Sophomore guard **Courtney**

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Simmons (Middletown) added ten points and four assists. Sophomore forward **Broderick Sawyer (Norwalk)** and freshman guard **Nick Nedwick (Irvington, NY)** led a balanced rebounding effort with seven each. Roveto had six.

Since returning to the starting lineup over the last six games, Ortiz is averaging 20.5 points and 4.0 rebounds and is shooting 51.3 percent from the floor, 46.7 percent from three-point range (21-for-45) and 74.1 percent (20-for-27) from the stripe.

Western, which was 10-for-15 from three-point range in a five-point win at Eastern Jan. 20, missed 17 of 22 from that range Tuesday and was just 13-for-26 from the foul line.

Gary Robinson led Western with 19 points and eight rebounds, and Tyshawn Gillespie had 15 points. Gillespie had dropped in two free throws and added a bucket in the paint to pull Western even, then give the Colonials their last lead, 73-71, with 2:39 left.

Eastern visits Massachusetts Dartmouth Saturday at 3 p.m.

Saturday, Feb. 14, 2009

UMASS DARTMOUTH STOPS EASTERN M-BASKETBALL'S STREAK

Junior Edwin Ortiz reaches 1,000-point plateau in 100-88 LEC setback

NO. DARTMOUTH, MA -The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth's men's basketball team used a 15-0 run early in the first half to erase an eight-point deficit and went on to defeat visiting Eastern Connecticut State University, 100-88, in the second game of a Little East Conference doubleheader at the Tripp Athletic Center Saturday afternoon.

With the win, defending regular-season champion UMass (20-3, 10-2 little east) ends Eastern's (11-12, 5-7 little east) three-game winning streak and remains one game off the pace behind defending playoff champion Rhode Island College. Eastern is in sixth place in the eight-team conference, one game behind Western Connecticut and Keene State College, both at 6-6. The top four teams in the final LEC standings host first-round tournament games later this month.

UMass, which completes a season sweep of Eastern with its sixth straight win over the Warriors, entered the game ranked 15th nationally in the d3hoops.com poll.

Eastern took an early eight-point lead behind three-pointers by sophomore guard **Courtney Simmons (Middletown)**, freshman guard **Nick Nedwick (Irvington, NY)** and junior guard **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford)**.

Ortiz became the 22nd player in program history to score 1,000 points. He entered the game with 990 and reached and went over 1,000 points with a three-point field goal with 13:45 left in the game. The three-pointer was his third of five in the game. Ortiz had a three-pointer and two free throws in the first half, then pulled to within two of 1,000 with a three-pointer four minutes into the second half.

UMass Dartmouth fought back. A jump shot by junior forward Brandon Shelton and a three-pointer by junior guard Jeff Macchi helped them cut the lead to 14-11. After senior guard Reece Freeman hit a pair of free throws, sophomore forward Brandon Stephens scored eight consecutive points on a jumper and a pair of treys to make it 21-14 with 13:21 remaining. A jumper by Eastern freshman forward **Jamie Kohn (Columbia)** and a free throw by freshman center **Jeremy Thompson (Berlin)** allowed Eastern to tie the

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game at 23-23 midway through the first half. But Shelton sandwiched a pair of a pair of jump shots around a three-pointer by freshman guard Alex Klepadlo, and the Corsairs built a 30-23 advantage and never trailed again.

A 9-0 Corsair run, which included a pair of layups by junior forward Matt Walker, a three-pointer by Macchi and a driving layup by Freeman, allowed UMass Dartmouth to claim a 52-38 lead at intermission. The Warriors outscored UMD in the second half, 50-48, but Walker's jump shot in the final minute capped the scoring for the Corsairs, who scored 100 points for the first time this season.

Stephens led all scorers with 27 points, Freeman added 18, and Walker, Shelton and Macchi contributed 15 points apiece. Ortiz led Eastern Connecticut with 17 points. Kohn added 16 points -- his first double-digit game since Jan. 17 -- and Thompson scored 11. Walker had nine rebounds and Freeman for the Corsairs, but sophomore forward **Bill Roveto (South Windsor)** had 10 for ECSU -- one shy of his career high -- as the Warriors out rebounded UMass Dartmouth, 36-35. Freeman also had nine assists, while Simmons had 13 for Eastern.

Eastern hosts Keene State College Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. in its final regular-season home game of the year.

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little east conference

Tuesday, February 17, 2009

EASTERN M-BASKETBALL FORGES THREE-WAY TIE IN LITTLE EAST

Warriors post most decisive win in series with Keene State with 73-53 victory

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. – The Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team limited the third-most prolific offensive team in the Little East Conference to 19 first-half points and snapped a four-game losing streak at the hands of Keene State College with a 73-53 victory Tuesday night at Francis E. Geissler Gymnasium.

A winner of four of its last five, Eastern (12-12, 6-7 little east) moves into a three-way tie for fourth place in the conference with Keene (10-13, 6-7 little east) and Western Connecticut State University (13-10, 6-7 little east). The top four seeds in the upcoming conference tournament host first-round tournament games.

After giving up 73 points and losing by ten points at Keene three weeks ago, Eastern held the Owls to 19 first-half points Tuesday on the way to a 17-point, 36-19 halftime lead. Keene shot just 28.6 percent from the floor over the first 20 minutes, missing six of seven three-pointers.

The winning margin is Eastern's largest in the 28-game series.

The Warriors led by 21 five minutes into the second half before Keene battled back to within ten, 49-39, with 12 minutes left. At that point, the Warriors used a 10-3 spurt to re-gain a 17-point advantage, 59-42, with nine minutes left. Junior **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford)** scored eight of Eastern's points in that run. He hit a driving layup, then sank both of his three-pointers. A 1,000-point scorer at Eastern, Ortiz also holds program season and career records for threes. The Warriors shot 61.15 percent from the floor in the second half.

The worst free-throw shooting team in the LEC, Eastern won the battle at the stripe. The Warriors converted 18 of 24 (16-of-18 in the first half) while Keene, the conference's free-throw leader, was 14-for-19.

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Playing their final regular-season home games, Eastern seniors **Kris Johnson (Sturbridge, MA)**, **Daryl James (Waterbury)** and **Michael Brady (Southbury)** made their first starts of the season (it was the first career starts for Brady and James). James

had a career-high 11 points and five rebounds in 20 minutes, Brady contributing five points, four rebounds and three assists in 19 minutes.

Ortiz led all players with 14 points, sophomore **Courtney Simmons (Middletown)** adding 13, sophomore **Broderick Sawyer (Norwalk)** 12 points and a team-high six rebounds and James 11. In the second half, Sawyer hit all four of his field goals while James was 4-for-5.

All-conference seniors Tyler Kathan (Ludlow, VT) and Nate Anderson (Westminster, MA) were Keene's double-digit scorers. Kathan had 13 points, but only two on 1-for-5 shooting in the first half. Anderson scored 11 of his team's 19 points in the first half. Starting point guard Tavonne Reid (Bridgeport, CT) picked up his third and fourth fouls in the opening two minutes of the second half and had only two points in eight second-half minutes before fouling out with four minutes left and his team trailing by 15.

Kathan scored 11 points in the second half despite playing most of the half with four personal fouls.

Eastern visits conference leader Rhode Island College Saturday at 3 p.m.

little east conference

Saturday, Feb. 21, 2009

EASTERN M-BASKETBALL CAN'T CATCH RHODE ISLAND, 78-65
As the No. 5 tournament seed, Warriors will visit No. 4 Keene State Tuesday

PROVIDENCE, R.I. -- The Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team cut a 13-point deficit to seven before Rhode Island College scored eight in a row to pull away over the final seven minutes as the Warriors dropped a 78-65 decision in a Little East Conference game that was the final regular-season game for both teams.

Already assured of the No. 1 seed in the conference tournament which begins Tuesday, No. 18 nationally-ranked Rhode Island (21-4, 13-1 little east) closes the regular season with 12 straight wins and finishes with its best LEC regular-season record. The win wraps up RIC's second outright LEC regular-season title in three years.

Having won four of its previous five entering the game, Eastern (12-13, 6-8 little east) matches its LEC record of a year ago and finishes in a two-way tie for fifth place in the final conference standings with Western Connecticut State University.

Eastern was awarded the No. 5 seed, based on a better conference road record, and will visit No. 4 seed Keene State College Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. The Warriors were 4-3 in LEC road games during the regular season, Western 2-5.

Trailing by 11 points with eight minutes left, the Warriors crept back to within seven and had possession of the ball with the chance to cut deeper into the deficit. While Eastern missed two shots and turned the ball over three times over on its next five possessions, however, the hosts scored buckets on their ensuing four possessions to push their lead to 15. 70-55, with four minutes left.

The win was the ninth in the last ten games for Rhode Island over Eastern, which committed its second-most turnovers this season (21). The Warriors, however, excelled at the foul line for the second straight game. Shooting under 60 percent from the stripe this year, the Warriors sank 11 of 13 against Rhode Island and is 29-for-37 (78.4 percent) in their last two games and 63-for-86 (73.3 percent) in their last four.

Eastern was down by only two with two minutes left in the first half before Rhode Island ended the half with an 8-2 run to take an eight-point, 39-31 advantage into the

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lockerroom. The Warriors scored the first two baskets of the second half to make it 39-35, but the hosts again answered the call with a 10-2 scoring burst that upped the RIC lead to 12, 49-37, eight minutes into the half.

In a season-high 26 minutes, freshman forward **Jeremy Thompson (Berlin)** led Eastern with 15 points and eight rebounds. Freshman guard **Nick Nedwick (Irvington, NY)** had 13 points, six assists and six rebounds and sophomore guard **Courtney Simmons (Middletown)** 12 points and four rebounds. Team scoring leader **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford)**, averaging 20 points over the last eight games, had only two points on 1-for-8 shooting. As a team, the Warriors missed nine of 11 three-pointers.

Rhode Island senior guard Bobby Bailey, the MVP of last year's conference tournament, led all players with 16 points, with senior forward Kaseem Johnson adding 12 points and a team-high eight rebounds. The Anchormen turned the ball over only 11 times and nailed 20 of 23 free throws.

little east conference

Tuesday, Feb. 24, 2009

KEENE ROMPS PAST EASTERN M-BASKETBALL IN LEC TOURNEY
Despite sufficient offense, Warriors can't stop Owls in 100-75 first-round setback

KEENE, NH -- Tyler Kathan, Nate Anderson and Derek D'Amours combined for 66 points and 27 rebounds to power the fourth-seeded Keene State College men's basketball team to a 100-75 victory over fifth-seeded Eastern Connecticut State University in a loss which eliminated the Warriors in the opening round of the Little East Conference Tournament Tuesday night before a reported crowd of 1,200 at Spaulding Gym.

Since a buzzer-beater gave the Warriors an 80-79 first-round LEC tournament win over the Owls in Willimantic in 2000 en route to the conference title, Eastern has been eliminated in the opening round of the tournament nine straight seasons. All but one of those games has been played on the road.

The game Tuesday was in sharp contrast to the one won by Eastern (12-14), 73-53, exactly a week ago, when the Warriors shot 61.5 percent from the floor in the second half and held Keene State (12-13) to 19 first-half points and 34.6 percent shooting from the floor. Kathan and Anderson had a combined 25 points and 11 rebounds in that game -- well below their averages -- and were just 9-for-26 from the floor.

The 6-foot-5 inch All-America Kathan tossed in a game-high 32 points tonight and grabbed ten rebounds, and the 6-foot-6 inch Anderson and 6-foot-5 inch D'Amours scored 17 points each. Anderson led all players with 13 rebounds. None of the three turned the ball over in a combined 87 minutes.

Keene, a woeful 3-for-12 from three-point range in last Tuesday's lethargic loss to the Warriors, nailed ten of 22 from behind the arc Tuesday night and shot 55.1 percent in all from the floor. Kathan was 12-for-20 from the floor with four three-pointers, Anderson 7-for-10 from the field, and D'Amours 7-for-14 with three three-pointers.

In the first of two LEC tournament semifinals Friday night, Keene meets two-time defending champion and No. 1 seed and host Rhode Island College (22-4), which eased

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past eighth-seeded University of Southern Maine (5-21) Tuesday, 73-57. In the second semifinal, second-seeded UMass Dartmouth (23-3) faces sixth-seeded Western Connecticut State University (14-11). The tourney final is scheduled for Saturday at 5 p.m. at Rhode Island College.

The Owls pulled away from the Warriors with a 22-5 run that started and ended with top of the key three-pointers by Kathan. His last one put Keene up by 20, 35-15, with five minutes left in the first half. Kathan, who finished the half with 22 point on 8-of-12 shooting, had 12 of those points during the run.

Sophomore guard **Courtney Simmons (Middletown)** led Eastern with 25 points, senior guard **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford)** adding 13. Sophomore forward **Bill Roveto (South Windsor)** and freshman guard **Nick Nedwick (Irvington, NY)** each had six rebounds.