

as it was heading out of bounds and batted it to sophomore guard **Nick Nedwick (Irvington, NY)**, who found junior forward **Bill Roveto (South Windsor)** ahead of the field for an uncontested layup.

In the first meeting between the teams in nine years, Wentworth got balanced scoring in the early moments of the game to move out to an eight-point, 12-4 lead. The Warriors held the Leopards scoreless from the floor over three minutes, however, getting buckets by Kohn, freshman guard **Mike Garrow (Terryville)** and Ortiz to get back into the game, pulling to within one with nine minutes left in the first half. Garrow took over for Nedwick with Eastern trailing by four eight minutes into play and provided an instant spark by scoring on all three of his field goal tries in a four-minute stretch, the final hoop tying the game with six minutes left in the half.

Shooting .671 percent from the foul line this year, Eastern was 16-for-20 in the game. Wentworth's poor free throw shooting was costly. The Leopards missed 11 of 20 tries from the stripe.

Nedwick contributed nine points and five rebounds and Kohn led the Warriors with eight caroms.

Herrick reached his season averages with a team-high 13 points and game-high 11 rebounds. Senior guard Jack Barrett (Reading, MA) had ten points and five rebounds and senior forward Shane West (Saco, ME) ten points and four rebounds. Senior forward Matt Abbott (Falmouth, MA) had nine points and six rebounds.

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

Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2010

EASTERN M-BASKETBALL DOWNS DEFENDING LEC CHAMPIONS, 84-78

Three players are a combined 12-for-12 from the line in second half against UMD

NORTH DARTMOUTH, Mass. – No current member of this year’s Eastern Connecticut State University men’s basketball team had beaten the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth on the Corsairs’ home court.

That all changed Tuesday night. But not without some anxious moments.

Eastern (10-3, 3-1 little east) built a 12-point lead in the second half and used timely free-throw shooting to withstand four consecutive turnovers in the final two minutes in posting an 84-78 victory over the defending Little East Conference tournament champions and 2009/10 pre-season conference favorites.

By winning for the fourth time in five games on their opponents’ home court this year, the Warriors break from a three-way second-place tie in the conference standings to sole possession of second place – one game behind 2008/09 regular-season conference Rhode Island College.

Until Tuesday night, Eastern had not beaten UMass (8-5, 2-2 little east) on the Corsair’s home court since a thrilling 82-81 victory en route to a regular-season sweep during the 2003/04 season (UMass came back to eliminate the Warriors at Geissler Gym, 62-61, in the LEC tournament later that season). The victory also ends an overall six-game losing streak for Eastern at the hands of UMass dating back to the 2006/07 season.

With senior guard **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford)** sinking seven of 12 field goals (5-for-9 from three-point range), Eastern shot a season-high 58.5 percent from the floor to offset 22 turnovers. The Warriors were 13-for-18 from the foul line in the second half, with Ortiz at 6-for-6, sophomore post player **Jeremy Thompson (Berlin)** 4-for-4 and freshman guard **Joe Ives (Avon)** 2-for-2.

Ortiz exceeded the 20-point range for the first time in six games, and the Warriors needed every one of his game-high 25 points after giving the ball away on four consecutive possessions in the final minutes that had clipped a comfortable ten-point lead with two minutes left to five, 80-75, with 90 seconds left. Clinging to that lead, Eastern gave the ball away again but UMass missed a critical shot. Thompson grabbed the rebound and fed sophomore guard **Nick Nedwick (Irvington, NY)** for a game-breaking layup that made it 82-75 with 30 seconds left. A three-point field goal by Paul Rose seconds later cut Eastern’s lead to four, 82-78, but Ortiz sank two free throws with 10.3 seconds left to ice the win.

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After a three-point field goal by UMass' Brandon Shelton had pulled UMass to within six, 76-70 with 3:37 left, Thompson scored a key basket on a pass from Nedwick to make it 78-70 with 3:10 left. Nedwick then grabbed a defensive rebound on a UMass miss and junior forward **Bill Roveto (South Windsor)** put back a missed three-pointer by Ortiz to make it 80-70.

Thompson came off the bench for a career-high 20 points (7-for-9 from the floor, 6-for-7 from the line) and also added six rebounds. Roveto was 7-for-7 from the floor on the way to 15 points (improving his season shooting percentage to .592) and added eight rebounds. Nedwick had 11 points and a game-high seven rebounds sophomore guard **Jamie Kohn (Columbia)** had nine points, a game-high ten rebounds and six assists without a turnover in 29 minutes.

All-conference forwards Brandon Stephens and Shelton combined for 33 points for UMass, with Stephens leading his team with 22 (9-for-16 from the floor). Rose, a first-year community collegiate transfer guard, had 17 points, 12 coming on three-point field goals.

Eastern played its second straight game without junior point guard **Courtney Simmons (Middletown)**, out of action with a hand injury. UMass was without senior guard Jeff Macchi, an All-Defensive selection last year and this year's LEC co-leader in steals.

Eastern hosts Wentworth Institute of Technology Thursday at 7 p.m.



UMass

Dartmouth

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MEN'S BASKETBALL FALLS TO EASTERN CONNECTICUT STATE, 84-78

NORTH DARTMOUTH, MA-Visiting Eastern Connecticut State took a 42-31 halftime lead and went on to defeat the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth men's basketball team, 84-78, in a Little East Conference game at the Tripp Athletic Center Tuesday evening.

The Warriors, who led by 10 points with 4:11 remaining, had to hold off a late rally by the Corsairs. Junior forward Brandon Stephens (Dorchester, MA/Newton North HS) hit a couple of free throws with 2:02 remaining, sophomore guard Alex Klepadlo (Bernardston, MA/Pioneer Valley HS) added a lay-up, and sophomore guard Paul Rose (Boston, MA/North Cambridge Catholic HS/Massachusetts Bay CC) made a free throw to cut the lead to 80-75 with 1:28 left. Sophomore guard Nick Nedwick (Irvington, NY/Irvington HS) made a lay-up with 35 seconds left, then Rose connected from three-point range to make it 82-78 with 15 seconds left. Senior guard Edwin Ortiz (Hartford, CT/East Catholic HS) then hit a pair of free throws to account for the final score.

The Warriors made 62.1 per cent of their shots from the field in the first half in building an 11-point lead. UMass Dartmouth came back in the second half and shot 53.1 per cent from the field and outscored Eastern Connecticut, 47-42.

Stephens made nine of 16 shots from the field and led the Corsairs with 22 points. Rose added 17 points, and senior forward Brandon Shelton (Cambridge, MA/Cambridge Rindge & Latin HS/UMass Lowell) contributed 11. Ortiz led all scorers with 25 points, sophomore forward Jeremy Thompson (Berlin, CT/Berlin HS) added 20, junior forward Bill Roveto (South Windsor, CT/East Catholic HS) had 15, and Nedwick added 11. Shelton had six rebounds for UMD, while sophomore forward Jamie Kohn had 10 rebounds for the Warriors, who out rebounded the Corsairs, 42-24. UMass Dartmouth forced 22 turnovers while committing just 11, but ECSU made 16 of 24 free throws to eight of 10 for the Corsairs.

"As a team, we need to work on consistency," said UMass Dartmouth Head Coach Brian Baptiste. "We play hard in spurts and we play soft in spurts and we need to play with more of a sense of urgency. I thought our players who saw some extra minutes responded well. Our team is capable of playing, and I'm sure they'll respond in a positive way."

The Corsairs dropped to 8-5 and 2-2 in the Little East Conference with the victory, while the Warriors improved to 10-3 and 3-1 in LEC play with the victory. UMass Dartmouth will return to action when they visit Salem State Thursday evening. ECSU will host Wentworth Thursday evening.

UMASSDARTMOUTH BASKETBALL

Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2010

BRIDGEWATER STATE EDGES EASTERN M-BASKETBALL
Two players total 44 points for Bears in 71-67 victory over Warriors

BRIDGEWATER, Mass. -- The Bridgewater State College men's basketball team broke quickly in the second half and went on to hand the Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball teams its first loss on its opponent's court, 71-67, Wednesday night at the Tinsley Center.

After six ties and 11 lead changes produced a halftime tie, Bridgewater (4-5) scored 11 of the first 13 points of the second half to snap a four-game losing streak. Eastern (8-3), coming off a split at last weekend's Captains Shootout at Christopher Newport University, lost for the first time after winning each of its three games on its opponent's court this year.

Last year at Geissler Gym, Eastern brought a .500 record into its game against Bridgewater but routed the Bears, 94-77, who eventually advanced to the Sweet 16 round of the NCAA Division III tournament. The Warriors had won five of six against Bridgewater in this series.

Junior guards Corey Connor and Judah Jackson combined for 44 of their team's points. Connor poured in 25 points (10-for-14 from the floor) and Jackson totalled 19 points and nine rebounds. Junior forward Nicholas Motta added seven points, five rebounds, six assists and four steals for the hosts. Bridgewater shot over 57 percent from the floor in the second half.

Off the bench, junior guard **Courtney Simmons (Middletown)** paced the Warriors with 13 points, five assists and three rebounds, while junior post player **Bill Roveto (South Windsor)** had ten points (5-for-9 from the floor) and seven rebounds. Sophomore guard **Jamie Kohn (Columbia)** recorded a double-double with 11 points and a game-high 13 rebounds, leading Eastern to a decisive 45-26 advantage on the boards (13-3 offensively). Sophomore post player **Jeremy Thompson (Berlin)** had 12 points and five rebounds, also off the bench.

Eastern returns to Little East Conference play Saturday when it hosts Massachusetts Boston at 3 p.m.

Sunday, Jan. 3, 2010

Sunday, Jan. 3, 2010

EASTERN M-BASKETBALL SALVAGES THIRD PLACE AT CNU SHOOTOUT
Warriors capitalize on free throw advantage to turn back Westfield State College, 72-64

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. – Six minutes into the second half of Sunday's consolation game against Westfield State College, it was evident that only a complete meltdown at the foul line would prevent the Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team from a two-game split at the 13th Annual Captains Shootout.

The Warriors were far from perfect from the stripe in the final 14 minutes of the second half, but thanks in large part to junior guard Courtney Simmons (Middletown), they had were good enough to post a 72-64 victory over the Owls to claim the third-place team trophy at the tournament, hosted the Christopher Newport University.

In a game dominated by personal fouls (57) and free throw attempts (82), Eastern (8-2) rebounding from a 20-point first-round loss to York College 24 hours earlier with a 72-64 victory that evened its 2010 record at 1-1. Westfield (6-6), which played the tournament without injured leading scorer Anthony Griffin, has lost six of its last eight after a 4-0 start.

Against Westfield, Eastern was awarded a season-high 47 free throw attempts, 39 of them in the second half. Westfield was whistled for a whopping ten personal fouls in the first six minutes of the second half, which meant that the Warriors would shoot a two-shot bonus for every ensuing foul the rest of the way. Eastern cashed in only 18 of those 30 tries over the final 14 minutes, but those 18 were enough to lift the team to the victory.

Simmons, held scoreless in four first-half minutes, was 9-for-10 from the stripe in ten second-half minutes to boast the Warriors. The 5-foot-11 inch point guard canned four key free throws in a span of just 22 seconds after Westfield had pulled to within three points seven minutes into the second half. Minutes later, Simmons and sophomore guard **Nick Nedwick (Irvington, NY)** were awarded a total of six free throws. Simmons swished both of his and Nedwick went 2-for-4 to make it 52-45. With the game virtually assured, Simmons added insurance by connecting on three of four 28 seconds apart to make it 70-58 with 20.5 seconds left.

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Eastern led by ten points with 9:34 left but needed two solid minutes of play later in the half to withstand Westfield's final bid. After a three-point Westfield field goal cut Eastern's lead to three with four minutes left, sophomore forward **Jamie Kohn (Columbia)** grabbed defensive rebounds off Westfield misses and also came up with a steal (one of five he had in the game) with two minutes left that sealed the win.

Senior guard **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford)** represented Eastern on the all-tournament team. The team's leading scorer in each tournament game, Ortiz set the early tempo in the game by tossing in four three-point field goals in the first 11 minutes that helped kick-start the Warriors after Saturday's lethargic opening loss. The program leader in career and season three-point field goals, Ortiz kept Eastern in front in the early going, then fired in two three-pointers in 26 seconds to make it 20-13 with 11 minutes left in the half.

With junior post player **Broderick Sawyer (Norwalk)** limited to 13 minutes because of foul trouble, sophomore **Jeremy Thompson (Berlin)** and first-year junior Jordan Levy (Woodbury) came off the bench to contribute to the inside game. Westfield was unable to contain the 6-foot-5 inch, 215 pound Thompson, who grabbed seven rebounds (four offensive) and chipped in four free throws. Levy had six points and six rebounds and no turnovers in 17 minutes.

Eastern turned the ball over only 13 times (28 in the tournament) which translated into only five Westfield points.

Nedwick struggled from both the field and stripe in the game, but his defensive intensity held Westfield perimeter sharpshooter Derek Leab to only eight points. Leab, who had 16 points in Saturday's 77-60 loss to Christopher Newport, scored all three of his three buckets on drives to the basket.

Ortiz shared game-high scoring honors with 18 points, with all five of his baskets coming from behind the arc. Simmons added 11 points and Kohn nine points and seven rebounds to go along with his five steals.

Ortiz's earned his spot on the all-tournament team by scoring 32 points on 9-of-20 shooting from the floor (7-of-15 from "three") and 7-of-8 from the foul line. He also had six assists, four rebounds and three steals. Against Westfield, he played all but four minutes.

Saturday, Jan. 2, 2010

YORK HAS TOO MUCH FOR EASTERN M-BASKETBALL, 92-72
Cardinals get dividends from unexpected source to down Warriors at CNU tourney

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. – The Eastern Connecticut State University men’s basketball team knew that it had to contain the outside shooting of senior Nicholas Hamilton-Lopez and the inside dominance of junior Marcel Esonwune if it hoped to defeat York College (NY) in the opening round of the 13th Annual Captains Shootout Saturday afternoon at the Freeman Center.

And while the Warriors were successful on both counts in the first half, they were blindsided by the offensive contributions of senior wing Elijah Evelyn, who scored 17 points in the final seven minutes of the first half to turn the tide in favor of the Cardinals, who eventually pulled away for a 92-72 victory in a game pitting two teams in their first official action in three weeks.

With its fifth win in its last six games, York (6-5) moved into the tournament championship game Sunday at 4 p.m. Eastern plays in the consolation game Sunday at 2 p.m. In Saturday’s other first-round game, host Christopher Newport University was scheduled to play Westfield State College at 6 p.m.

Averaging less than ten points per game with seven total three-point field goals this year, Evelyn led all players with 31 points – three times his season average -- and Hamilton-Lopez totaled 28. The pair combined to sink 11 of 20 from three-point range. Ranked fifth nationally with an average of 4.1, Hamilton-Lopez was 6-for-12 from beyond the arc and Evelyn was 5-for-8.

Esonwune entered play leading Division III in rebounding (15.5 ppg.) and blocked shots (4.1 bpg.) but was limited to nine rebounds and two blocks by an assortment of Eastern defenders who held him to only eight field goal attempts and one offensive rebound. Looking to pad his national-leading total for blocked shots, Esonwune was twice whistled for goaltending on shots by Eastern freshman post player Chris Robitaille (Canton) with a minute left in the first half and sophomore guard Nick Nedwick (Irvington, NY) two minutes into the second half.

Eastern trailed by only two points with seven minutes left in the first half before Evelyn went on a tear by scoring seven straight points and 17 of his team’s final 21 points of the half to boost the Cardinals into a 15-point, 45-30 lead. He scored his points on a combination of three-point field goals, drives to the basket, and turnaround jumps.

After being limited to eight points by Eastern in the first half (none over the final 11 minutes), Nicholas Hamilton-Lopez finally got untracked in the second half, scoring 20 points in six minutes late in the second half to spark York to the rout.

Trailing by 24 points five minutes into the second half, the Warriors went on a 22-7 run – getting points from four different players in a 9-0 burst – to pull to within nine, 65-56, with nine minutes left. With York coming out of its own timeout, the left-handed-shooting Hamilton-Lopez then buried a long three-pointer in front of his own bench—the first of three straight that he converted in as many York possessions in a span of just over a minute. After hitting those three three-

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pointers, Hamilton-Lopez then fed Ryan Exum after a York steal to give the Cardinals an 18-point, 76-58 lead with seven minutes left and he added six more points in 63 seconds soon after as York pulled away.

Although Eastern led only once (by a point in the opening minutes) in the game, the Warriors sparred with the Cardinals until seven minutes remained in the first half. Guards **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford)**, **Jamie Kohn (Columbia)** and **Courtney Simmons (Middletown)** all threw down three-pointers to keep the Warriors within striking distance. With eight minutes left in the first half, sophomore **Jeremy Thompson (Berlin)** then drew an offensive foul and Ortiz' followed the half belonged to Evelyn, however, who outscored Eastern 7-2 over the next 60 seconds to tilt the momentum York's way.

Ortiz led four modest double-digit Eastern scorers with 14 points, Kohn adding 13, Simmons 11 off the bench and Thompson ten

Eastern cleared the bench in the final minutes, with freshman guard **Edward Spain (North Windham)** seeing his first varsity action. First-year junior forward **Jordan Levy (Woodbury)** totaled his first collegiate points on his first shot with an off-balance put-back with 11 minutes left.

Saturday, Dec. 12, 2009

EASTERN M-BASKETBALL SURGES TO 7-1 WITH LITTLE EAST WIN
With 77-61 victory, Warriors accumulate most wins in first semester in 16 years

PLYMOUTH, NH – Sophomore guard **Nick Nedwick (Irvington, NY)** scored a career-high 22 points Saturday afternoon to lead the Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team past Plymouth State University, 77-61, in a Little East Conference contest at Foley Gymnasium.

After giving away a two-point loss in its conference opener last Saturday, Eastern (7-1, 1-1 little east) has responded with two road victories in five days and remains unbeaten away from Geissler Gymnasium in three games this season.. Since losing nine straight games against the Panthers at Plymouth (6-3, 0-2 little east) in a span of seven years, Eastern has defeated its hosts the last three times the teams have met at Foley Gymnasium.

Eastern's victory total is its highest prior to January 1 since the 1993/94 team won eight of its first nine prior to New Year's Day on the way to a final record of 14-10. The team's previous best start in seven seasons under current head coach **Bill Geitner** came three years ago with a 6-2 start which produced a 15-10 campaign.

Plymouth was playing its sixth straight home game, having won four of its first five on its home court.

Nedwick had thrown down a then-career-high of 21 points in Saturday's loss to Rhode Island College, but was coming off a 1-for-7 performance in Tuesday's four-point non-conference win at Endicott College. Against Plymouth, Nedwick was good on 8-of-12 field goal attempts, including 2-of-4 from three-point range.

Nedwick led a balanced scoring attack as five Warriors scored in double figures, two of them coming off the bench. In all, Eastern's bench players outscored their Plymouth counterparts by 19. Senior guard **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford)** dumped in 11 points off the bench, and sophomore post player **Jeremy Thompson (Berlin)** scored a season-high 12 points in a reserve role on perfect shooting from the floor (3-for-3) and foul line (6-for-6). He also shared game-high rebounding honors with junior **Bill Roveto (South Windsor)** and sophomore **Jamie Kohn (Columbia)**, with eight. Kohn's ten points gave the Warriors five double-digit scorers.

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In his first start of the year, junior guard **Courtney Simmons (Middletown)** scored 13 points (5-for-10 FG) and was among four Eastern players to shoot at least 50 percent from the floor. As a team, the Warriors shot 51.9 percent – their second 50 percent shooting afternoon in as many conference games this season.

Senior guard Mike Chergey led the Panthers with 16 points, and classmate Eric Hondal added 14; but they were the only two Panthers to reach double figures in scoring. Plymouth shot just 38 percent from the floor and was out-rebounded by eight.

The Warriors led most of the first half, with Plymouth's only advantage a 12-11 score five minutes into the game. Eastern outscored the Panthers 12-2 over the next five minutes to take a nine-point lead at the midway point, and it was also a nine-point margin at halftime, 36-27.

Eastern never trailed after the opening minutes -- and was never behind by more than a point -- and maintained the lead throughout the second half. The Panthers remained within striking distance until a 10-1 Eastern scoring run over seven minutes pushed the lead to 13, 68-55, with two minutes left. The Warriors held the home team without a field goal during that stretch in the second half to seal the win, which was their largest margin of victory this season. In those seven minutes, Simmons scored four points, Roveto, Ortiz and Nedwick two each and Roveto and Nedwick each grabbed two rebounds. On 11 possessions in that span, Plymouth missed six shots and two free throws and turned the ball over three times.

Eastern is idle until competing in the Christopher Newport University Captains Shootout Jan. 2, facing York College of New York in its tournament opener at 2 p.m.

Tuesday, December 8, 2009

EASTERN M-BASKETBALL REGAINS WINNING TOUCH IN 78-74 VICTORY

Edwin Ortiz torches Endicott with eight three-pointers as Warriors improve to 6-1

BEVERLY, Mass. – Senior guard **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford)** extended his program record for three-point field goals by burying all eight of his team's makes and lifting the Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team to a 78-74 victory over Endicott College Tuesday night at MacDonald Gymnasium.

Coming off its only loss of the season, Eastern (6-1) took the lead for good late in the first half and carried a 12-point lead -- its largest of the game -- into the final four minutes. Endicott (3-4) sank a three-pointer at the buzzer to account for the final four-point margin.

Ortiz collected all eight of Eastern's three-point field goals -- tying his career high and leaving him one shy of the game record held by current assistant coach **Kris Johnson** -- to extend his program record for three-pointers to 212. Ortiz, ranked 15th all-time in scoring at Eastern, has hit at least one three-pointer in all seven games this year and in 19 of his last 20 games dating back to last January 13.

Ortiz led all players with 28 points -- equaling the third-highest point total of his career. Ortiz was 8-for-15 from three-point range, 10-for-18 overall from the floor. Although Eastern's other four starters combined for only 25 points, the Warriors got strong off-the-bench performances from junior guard **Courtney Simmons (Middletown)** and freshman post player **Chris Robitaille (Canton)**.

Held without a point in Saturday's two-point loss to Rhode Island College, Simmons was second to Ortiz with 13 points Tuesday and also chipped in four assists and three steals in 26 minutes. In his second collegiate appearance, the 6-for-5 inch Robitaille recorded his first collegiate stats (other than minutes). He had ten points and five rebounds in 24 minutes, scoring eight points and pulling down four rebounds in 13 first-half minutes. In a six-minute stretch after replacing junior **Broderick Sawyer (Norwalk)** six minutes into the game, Robitaille followed a missed attempt with hit two consecutive baskets, and grabbed two rebounds. He later returned to drop in two more short jumpers in the final minutes of the first half to help the Warriors take a seven-point halftime lead.

In snapping a three-game losing streak at the hands of Endicott, the Warriors took the lead for good with five minutes left in the first half when Robitaille and first-year junior forward **Jordan Levy (Woodbury)** grabbed offensive rebounds to set up a hoop by Simmons. Eastern scored the final six points of the first half when Robitaille connected on two buckets and sophomore guard **Jamie Kohn (Columbia)** hitting a layup on a pass from Simmons in the closing seconds of the first half.

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Junior post player **Bill Roveto (South Windsor)** of Eastern led all players in the game with 11 rebounds and sophomore guard **Nick Nedwick (Irvington, NY)** handed out a career-high eight assists.

Endicott was paced by freshman guard Danquah Rawlins and junior guard Mike Rhodes, who had 17 points and five assists apiece. Six-foot-eight inch sophomore post player Erik Callo notched a double-double with ten points and ten rebounds.

Eastern, which has won four of its six games by 12 total points this season, travels to Plymouth State Saturday for a Little East Conference game at 3 p.m. in its final outing prior to exams.

Saturday, December 5, 2009

LATE COLLAPSE COSTS EASTERN M-BASKETBALL IN LEC OPENER

In stunning turn of events, Warriors give the ball away seven times in final 2:46

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. – Rhode Island College outscored the Eastern Connecticut State University men’s basketball team 14-2 over the final three minutes, forcing the Warriors into seven turnovers in that span to post a stunning 89-87 triumph in the Little East Conference opener for both schools Saturday at Francis E. Geissler Gymnasium.

In control of a ten-point lead with three minutes left, Eastern (5-1, 0-1 little east) couldn’t contend with the pressure applied by Rhode Island College (4-3, 1-0 little east) over the final minutes. The defending conference regular-season champions forced the Warriors into seven turnovers over the final 2:46 by coming up with five steals, converting five of six free throws and sinking half of their field goal attempts.

Rhode Island, rebuilding after losing four starters from last year’s NCAA tournament qualifier, led only once in the second half – when it counted -- when junior guard Antone Gray turned a steal and relay from sophomore forward Mason Choice into the go-ahead bucket, 88-87, with 64 seconds left. With 14 seconds left, Gray missed a three-point field goal after RIC had re-gained possession on Eastern’s 15th turnover of the half, but Choice came up with the offensive rebound and Gray followed by sinking one of two free throws seconds later.

Unable to find any operating room due to RIC’s suffocating pressure on their final possession of the game, the Warriors finally tossed up a runner in the lane as time wound down, but the ball drew iron and bounced away as the final horn sounded. If it had dropped, Eastern would have been involved in its fourth overtime in six outings this year. The Warriors are 3-0 when the game has extended into an extra session.

Leading by six points at halftime, Eastern used a three-point barrage in the opening six minutes of the second half in storming to a 17-point, 68-51 lead. At one stretch in that run, all four of the team’s field goals came from behind the arc. Sophomore guard **Nick Nedwick (Irvington, NY)** sandwiched a pair of threes around three-pointers from senior guard **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford)** and sophomore swingman **Jamie Kohn (Columbia)**.

Rhode Island cured an early-season case of free throw misery by draining 25 of 28 tries from the stripe in the game after entering play with a miserable mark just over 50 percent. Gray hit his first 12 free throws before missing the first of his two freebies with 14 seconds left, and finished at 13-for-14 from the stripe.

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In the second half, Rhode Island coughed the ball up only four times, sank 17 of 20 free throws (outscored Eastern by 12 in that department) and outmaneuvered Eastern in the paint to drop in half of its 18 two-point field goals.

The late collapse spoiled a balanced offensive and effective defensive effort by Eastern. Offensively, the Warriors converted more than half of their field goals (8-for-19 from three-point range) and outrebounded RIC by eight. Nedwick finished with a career-high 21 points and dished out seven assists, while Kohn contributed his second double-double in four games with 15 points and a career-high 13 rebounds and also handed out seven assists. Sophomore post player **Broderick Sawyer (Norwalk)** dominated the paint with 20 points (9-for-20 FG) and added six rebounds, while junior post player **Bill Roveto (South Windsor)** added 12 points (8-for-9 FT) and six rebounds. Roveto left the game with his third foul with Eastern leading by ten a minute into the second half and returned six minutes later with the Warriors in command of a 13-point lead.

Gray and senior guard Jake Grimes engineered Rhode Island's second-half surge, combining for 33 of their team's 44 second-half points. Half of Gray's 18 second-half points came from the foul line, while Grimes totaled 15 points off the bench.

Eastern was foiled in its attempt to open the season with six straight wins for the first time since 1993. RIC has beaten Eastern ten of the last 11 times the teams have met.

Eastern visits Endicott College Tuesday at 7 p.m.

Thursday, December 3, 2009

DEFENSE VAULTS EASTERN M-BASKETBALL PAST NEW ENGLAND
For second straight game, backcourt sparks Warriors to victory in 65-51 triumph

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. – The Eastern Connecticut State University defense set season-bests in a number of categories, and for the second straight game was sparked by the offense of its backcourt in a 65-51 non-conference victory over the University of New England Thursday night at Francis E. Geissler Gymnasium.

En route to its fifth straight win to open the season, Eastern held New England (2-5) 13 points below its season average. Against an aggressive Eastern defense, the Nor'easters managed only five three-point field goals on 32 attempts. The visitors were averaging over ten three-pointers per game entering play as it lost its fourth in a row. New England defeated Eastern by six points a year ago on the way to an NCAA tournament berth and final 24-5 record.

In the game, Eastern's defense established season team bests for opposing field goal percentage (26.2), three-point field goal percentage (15.6), least three-pointers, least rebounds (29) and least points.

The Warriors never trailed by more than a bucket and took the lead for good on a three-point field goal by junior guard **Courtney Simmons (Middletown)** with 12 minutes left in the first half. Eastern took command for good at the outset of the second half. Leading by five at the break, the Warriors scored seven of the first eight points of the second half and held the visitors without a bucket through the first four minutes of the half in moving out to a 12-point lead. The lead fell below ten points only once the rest of the game. The Warriors led by as many as 21 points with six minutes left in the game on a three-point field goal by senior guard **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford)**.

After combining for 61 of the team's 75 points in Sunday's overtime victory over Conn College, the backcourt trio of Simmons, Ortiz and sophomore **Nick Nedwick (Irvington, NY)** totaled 41 of 65 points against the Nor'easters.

Simmons came off the bench to score a team-high 18 points on 7-for-10 shooting from the floor and 3-for-4 free throw shooting. Simmons also contributed five rebounds and four assists. Scoreless on five first-half shots, Ortiz scored 12 over the final 20 minutes and added four assists in the game. Nedwick added 11 points (5-for-11 from the floor) and four rebounds.

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Sophomore **Jamie Kohn (Columbia)** helped Eastern to a 46-29 advantage on the boards with nine, junior **Broderick Sawyer (Norwalk)** adding seven rebounds in 14 minutes. Sawyer picked up his third foul 64 seconds into the second half and did not return.

Eastern's top six players in the game shot 54.2 per cent from the floor, many coming on odd-man rushes to the basket ahead of the UNE defense.

Quentin Thompson led UNE with a game-high 23 points, 14 points above his average. Thompson, who scored nearly half of his team's points, was 8-for-13 from the floor and also shared game-high rebounding honors with nine. Top scorer Anthony Johnson (14.0 ppg.) did not see time, and second-leading scorer Victor Oruonyehu (10.5 ppg.) was held scoreless in 23 minutes. The Nor'easters were held 17 points below their season average.

Looking for its first 6-0 start since 1993, Eastern hosts Rhode Island College Saturday at 3 p.m. in its Little East Conference opener. RIC won last year's LEC regular-season title.

Sunday, November 29, 2009

EASTERN M-BASKETBALL CLAIMS THIRD STRAIGHT OVERTIME WIN
Three guards combine for 61 points, Warriors draw five charge fouls in 75-74 victory

NEW LONDON, Conn. – Just nine days into a three-month season, the Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team has already left its imprint on the program recordbook.

Sunday afternoon, the Warriors played – and won – their third consecutive overtime decision by erasing an early 14-point deficit and surging to a 45-minute, 75-74 non-conference decision over in-state neighbor Connecticut College at the Charles Luce Fieldhouse.

Since dispatching Purchase College by eight points in the regulation 40 minutes in its season-opener last Friday night, the Warriors have gone overtime to turn away Bowdoin College (71-67) Saturday, Trinity College (77-74) this past Tuesday, and Conn College Sunday.

Just four games into the season, Eastern (4-0) has already played – and won -- three overtime games – the most OT victories in a season under eighth-year head coach **Bill Geitner**. In Geitner's first seven years, the Warriors played a total of 15 overtime games, winning seven. Until this year, Eastern had never won more than two overtime contests in a season under Geitner, that coming five years ago in a triple-overtime season-opening 116-114 season-opening decision over Westfield State College and an 80-77 Little East Conference road triumph over Massachusetts Boston in mid-January.

Against Conn College (1-3) Sunday, the Warriors sank their final eight free throws, four by sophomore guard **Nick Nedwick (Irvington, NY)** in the final four minutes of regulation and two each by junior post player **Broderick Sawyer (Norwalk)** and senior guard **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford)** in one-and-one opportunities in the final four minutes of overtime.

Eastern trailed 16-2 seven minutes into play, but responded immediately by launching a 12-point run of its own to make it a two-point game midway through the half. Eastern nailed five of six shots and turned the ball over only once in that run, with Ortiz and junior guard **Courtney Simmons (Middletown)** each scoring five points and junior post player **Bill Roveto (South Windsor)** grabbing two rebounds.

The Warriors capped its uphill battle by finally pulled even at 57-all with 4:40 left in the game on a jumper by Ortiz, and took its first lead (61-59) on a pair of free throws by Nedwick with 2:32 left. For the first time in three overtime games, the Warriors scored the last points of regulation to extend the game into overtime. Simmons forced the extra session when he sank a 15-footer at the foul line with 16.9 seconds left to tie the game at 65-65, and Conn missed a potential winning baseline jump shot with 2.4 seconds left, the ball rebounded by Ortiz.

In overtime, Roveto drew the team's fifth charge (disqualifying Conn's Demetrius Porter, who had 14 points and ten rebounds). and Sawyer made Roveto's defense count by hitting both ends of a one-and-one, then sinking a short bank shot after a Conn miss to give the lead for good, 69-65, with three minutes.

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In the last two minutes of overtime, Ortiz scored four points with a baseline jump shot and two free throws, the latter a one-and-one try that proved to be the deciding points, 75-72, with 8.1 seconds left. Defending against a potential game-tying three-point shot, Eastern forced an air ball on long turnaround three-point bid by Shavar Bernier (3-for-8 from three-point range to that point) that was grabbed and put in by Brian Mahoney as the final horn sounded.

Ortiz, Simmons and Nedwick combined for 61 of the team's 75 points (22 of 41 from the floor).. Simmons scored 20 off the bench and the 5-foot-11 inch playmaker added a team-high seven rebounds. Ortiz led all players in the game with 24 points (17 after the break), with Nedwick chipping in 17. Nedwick swished all seven of his free throws, making him 11-for-12 through four games this year.

Shooting .614 from the foul line through the first three games, Eastern was 14-for-17 from the line and turned the ball over only seven times against Conn, which defeated Eastern in overtime in Willimantic last year. The Camels outrebounded Eastern by 11 and outscored the Warriors by three points from the floor, in large part to three-point marksmanship (10-for-22).

Junior guard Dean Lampe of Conn paced the Camels with 20 points, but was limited to just five points after a 15-point first half sparked his team to a six-point lead at the break. Lampe converted seven of 11 field goals – including all four of his three-pointers – and also grabbed eight rebounds.

Eastern hosts the University of New England Thursday at 7 p.m.

Tuesday, Nov. 24, 2009

EASTERN M-BASKETBALL WINS SECOND STRAIGHT IN OVERTIME
Against Trinity, Nedwick banks in three-pointer with 1.5 seconds left for winner

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. – Sophomore **Nick Nedwick (Irvington, NY)** banked in a three-point field goal with 1.5 seconds left in overtime to lift the Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team to a 77-74 victory over Trinity College Tuesday night at Francis E. Geissler Gymnasium.

The win is the second in overtime in three days for Eastern (3-0), which downed Bowdoin College, 63-56, in overtime Saturday afternoon in the championship game of the Eastern Tip-Off Tournament. The Warriors have not opened a season with three wins since 1993/94, when they won their first six under Eastern Hall of Fame coach Dan Switchenko en route to a final 14-10 ledger.

Trinity (1-2) scored the final four points of regulation to force overtime Tuesday, then scored five straight points over the final two minutes of overtime on an inside hoop by junior Luke MacDougall and a three-point field goal at the top of the circle by junior Brian Ford to tie the game at 74-74 with 24 seconds left.

With time running out in overtime, Eastern missed a short jump shot, but sophomore **Broderick Sawyer (Norwalk)** tipped the rebound in traffic to Nedwick, who banked in a three-point field goal from the left side to give Eastern a 77-74 lead. Following a timeout, Trinity inbounded into the backcourt but Ford stepped out of bounds in front of the Eastern bench trying to corral a bad pass as the final horn sounded.

Sawyer scored 18 of his career-high 25 points after the break to pace five Eastern double-figure scorers. Sawyer was 8-for-9 from the floor in the second half in scoring 16 of the team's 36 points. Sophomore **Jamie Kohn (Columbia)** had his second career double-double with 12 points and 11 rebounds, with Nedwick adding 11 points, seven rebounds, four assists and four steals. Junior **Bill Roveto (South Windsor)** scored eight of his ten points after the break and also led all players with a career-high 13 rebounds. Senior **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford)** chipped in ten points.

With the score tied with three minutes left in regulation, Sawyer converted a pair of inside baskets to give Eastern a 67-63 lead. The Warriors held that four-point lead with 2:23 left and had possession of the ball after Trinity missed a three-point field goal attempt, but Ford came up with a steal, then sank two free throws while rebounding a missed three-pointer, and dropped in a baseline layup with seven seconds left to tie the game at 67-all. A drive in the lane by Eastern junior **Courtney Simmons (Middletown)** wouldn't drop as time expired in regulation.

Trinity, which outscored Eastern by ten points from the foul line, got a team-high 19 points from MacDougall and a team-high ten rebounds from sophomore Chris Applegate. The Bantams fired in seven of their eight three-pointers after the break.

Until Tuesday, the Warriors had not played consecutive overtime games since Jan. 23-24, 1987. Playing Little East Conference games at home, Eastern edged the University of Southern Maine, 72-71, before sustaining an 85-81 loss to Plymouth State University.

Eastern visits Connecticut College Sunday at 3 p.m.

Saturday, Nov. 21, 2009

EASTERN OVERCOMES SIGNIFICANT SIZE DISADVANTAGE FOR WIN

Bowdoin forces overtime with three-pointer but Warriors claim 71-67 victory

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. -- Paul Sellew (Glastonbury, CT) of Bowdoin College forced overtime with a desperation three-point field goal with one second left and scored his team's first four points in overtime but the Warriors never trailed in the extra session after tournament MVP Bill Roveto (South Windsor, CT) put the Warriors up by one with a three-pointer in a 71-67 overtime win in the championship game of the Eastern Connecticut State University Tip-Off Tournament Saturday at Francis E. Geissler Gymnasium.

Courtney Simmons (Middletown, CT) hit a basket in the lane to break a 65-65 tie in overtime and completed a three-point play with a free throw as Eastern won its third tip-off title in seven years, but first since 2004.

Bowdoin featured six players standing at least 6-foot-6 inches tall. Although no Eastern player is taller than 6-foot-5, the Warriors amassed a 41-32 rebounding advantage.

The three-point field goal was the only overtime bucket for Roveto, who was limited to just two points in the second half. The Warriors never trailed by more than two points in the game and had moved out to a ten-point first-half lead before the Polar Bears scored seven of the final nine points of the first half to pull to within five points at halftime.

The Warriors led by five points with three minutes left but a three-pointer by Will Hanley (New Canaan, CT) on his only three-point attempt of the game got Bowdoin to within a point, 58-57 with 1:44 left. Simmons sank two free throws (he was 5-for-5 from the line after the half) to give the Warriors a three-point lead with 1:13 left, but was called for an offensive foul with 31 seconds left after Sellew missed a three-point attempt that gave Bowdoin a final possession. Bowdoin missed a three-point attempt with eight seconds left, but Sellew hustled to grab the rebound in traffic and beat the buzzer from the left side of the perimeter with one second left.

In its first tip-off game ever on Friday night, Bowdoin had crushed Fitchburg State College, 81-51, while Eastern held off the challenge of Purchase College, 68-60. Roveto tossed in a career-high 20 points in that game and Edwin Ortiz (Hartford, CT) added 17 as the duo combined for more than half of the team's points.

Hanley led four Bowdoin double-figure scorers in its first-round win with 17 points (7-for-9 from the floor), but managed only eight points against Eastern, none in the first half. Against Eastern, Sellew scored all but four of his points after the break.

Nick Nedwick (Irvington, NY) and Simmons joined Roveto on the all-tournament team from Eastern, with Sellew and 6-foot- 8 inch Mark Phillips (Ashland, MA) also gaining all-tournament recognition. In addition to tight defense, Nedwick scored a game-high 14

points against Bowdoin and added six rebounds. Roveto finished with 11 points and five rebounds in the title tilt and Simmons followed with 13 points in the final after scoring only four in the first round. Jamie Kohn (Columbia, CT) was Eastern's fourth double-digit scorer against Bowdoin, totalling 12 points and five rebounds. Broderick Sawyer (Norwalk, CT) had nine points and a team-high eight rebounds in the finale.

Limited to four points and two rebounds in the first half, Sellew led all players with 19 points and ten rebounds (8-for-13 from the floor). Phillips was the other Polar Bear in double figures with 13 points to go along with eight rebounds.

In the third-place game, all-tournament selection Corey Orgias (Highland Mills, NY) of Purchase College led four double-figure scorers with 15 points and a team-high eight rebounds in a 75-65 victory over Fitchburg State College. There were nine ties and 13 lead changes in the game before the Panthers finally pulled away with a seven-point run midway through the second half.

Blake Sheldon (Westminster, MA) led Fitchburg State with 17 points but was the only Falcon in double figures. Top returning scorer and inside presence Timothy Graham (Arlington, MA) was limited to only 19 minutes due to foul trouble and managed only six points.

Friday, November 20, 2009

EASTERN, BOWDOIN ADVANCE TO EASTERN TIP-OFF TITLE GAME
Warriors hold off Purchase, 68-60, Bowdoin routs Fitchburg State College, 81-51

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. – **Courtney Simmons (Middletown, CT)** made the most of his only field goal of the evening and **Jeremy Thompson (Berlin, CT)** sank two key free throws soon after as the Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team held off Purchase College Friday night to advance to the championship game of its own tip-off tournament with a 68-60 win at Francis E. Geissler Gymnasium.

Eastern's (1-0) Simmons hit a bucket in the paint with just under two minutes left and Thompson followed with two free throws after being fouled after a Purchase (0-1) miss to give the Warriors a 63-57 lead with 90 seconds left. The Warriors had led by seven with four minutes left before Purchase's Tyriq Harrington (Corona, NY) converted his only three-pointer of the game and Corey Orgias (Highland Mills, NY) and Marvin Billups (Chester, NY) nailed free throws to pull the Panthers to within two, 59-57 with 2:20 left.

The victory vaults Eastern into the tournament final for the 25th time in the tournament's 29-year history. The Warriors will meet Bowdoin College (1-0) Saturday at 3 p.m. in search of its eighth tournament championship. The Polar Bears built an 18-point halftime lead and Fitchburg State College (0-2) was never able to get any closer than 13 in the second half in Bowdoin's 81-51 decision. in the second of Friday's first-round games.

Eastern and Bowdoin will square off for the first time in 21 years. Bowdoin is making its Eastern Tip-Off Tournament debut.

Simmons, plagued by injuries throughout pre-season, missed all five of his shots in the first half while coming off the bench, but connected on a key basket late in Eastern's victory over Purchase. Eastern's **Bill Roveto (South Windsor, CT)** led all players in the game with a career-high 20 points and game-high-tying nine rebounds, with **Edwin Ortiz (Hartford, CT)** adding 17 points. The program's season and career three-point field goal leader, Ortiz swished four three-pointers. **Jamie Kohn (Columbia, CT)** added nine rebounds for the Warriors.

Michael McNair (Valley Cottage, NY) totaled a team-high 18 points for Purchase, Billups adding 11 points and a team-high eight rebounds and Orgias ten points and six rebounds.

Coming off last year's 17-9 campaign, Bowdoin shot just under 60 percent in the first half Friday night against Fitchburg State and limited the Falcons to 27.6 marksmanship from the floor in amassing its 18-point halftime lead. Will Hanley (New Canaan, CT) sparked Bowdoin's quick start with two three-point players. He sank a long three-pointer in the first three minutes, and converted a conventional three-point play a minute later as the Polar Bears' early lead ballooned to ten, 15-5, in the first five minutes.

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The 6-foot-7 inch Hanley dropped in seven of his nine shots in the game and led all players on both teams with 17 points and nine rebounds. Justin Nowell (Cos Cob, CT) came off the bench to contribute 14, Ryan O'Connell (Ipswich, MA) adding 12 and Mark Phillips (Ashland, MA) 11 points and eight rebounds for Bowdoin, which shot 58.8 percent from the floor. Hanley and O'Connell combined for 20 points on 8-for-11 shooting in the first half.

Fitchburg connected on 15 of 21 free throws but shot 28.1 percent from the floor, missing 17 of 21 three-pointers. Timothy Graham (Arlington, MA) and Colin London (Worcester, MA) each had 12 points for the Falcons and combined for 11 rebounds. Blake Sheldon (Westminster, MA) had 11 points and six rebounds.