

Tuesday, February 19, 2002

PLYMOUTH M-BASKETBALL RALLIES PAST ECSU IN LITTLE EAST
Freshman Pelotte's steal, free throws in final seconds sink Warriors in first round 84-83

PLYMOUTH, NH -- Freshman guard Nick Pelotte came up with a steal with 11 seconds left and cashed in two free throws seven seconds later to carry the Plymouth State College men's basketball team to a come-from-behind 84-83 win over Eastern Connecticut State University Tuesday in the opening round of the Little East Conference tournament at Foley Gymnasium.

Fourth-seeded Plymouth (16-9) advances to the tournament semifinals Friday night at 8 p.m. against top-seeded host Keene State College (21-3), which drew a first-round bye. Eastern (13-13) loses to the Panthers for the third time this year and for the fourth time in five conference tournament games all-time at Plymouth, NH.

Fifth-seeded Eastern led by 12, 49-37 at halftime and by four 83-79 after senior guard **Rich Vega (HARTFORD)** sank one of two free throws with 33 seconds left. Senior center Jason Blackburn countered by nailing a three-pointer at the top of the key on Plymouth's next possession to cut the gap to one, 83-82. Pelotte, the team's top guard off the bench, then stole the ball as ECSU was attempting to break pressure along the sideline, and moments later, was fouled while shooting a three-pointer with 3.7 seconds left. Pelotte, one of his team's top free throw shooters, missed the first of the three attempts, but after an ECSU time out, swished the next two for the go-ahead points. They were Pelotte's only free-throw tries in the game.

Following a Plymouth timeout, ECSU senior center **Billy Rea (WINSTED)** inbounded a pass the length of the floor to sophomore guard **Gordon Shepard (WATERBURY)**, whose baseline 18-footer with two seconds left bounced off the front of the iron and was rebounded by Plymouth sophomore Ryan Chicoine as time expired. It was only the second time this year in ten games that Eastern lost the game after leading at halftime.

Eastern, which had lost two regular-season games to Plymouth this year by a combined 34 points, shot 57.6 per cent from the floor in racing to a 12-point halftime lead, 49-37. Senior forward **Anthony Simao (LEBANON)** came off the bench for 14 points in the first half, sinking all four of his three-point field goals and both of his free throws. Simao, playing in only his 13th collegiate game at Eastern, scored a career-high 25 points and grabbed a career-high nine rebounds in 21 minutes. Simao, who sat out first-semester play with a pulled leg muscle, had never scored more than six points or grabbed more than three rebounds in a game at Eastgern. In the game, Simao was 8-for-13 from the floor and 4-for-4 from the line. His five three-point field goals in as many tries equalled the most made by an ECSU player in a conference tournament game and his 100 per cent mark was the highest by anyone with at least four attempts. As a team, Eastern's nine three-pointers were its most ever in a conference tournament game.

Vega followed Simao with 20 points for Eastern and concluded his 103-game career as the program's all-time leading scorer with 1,593 points. He set personal career-highs this year with 469 points and an 18.8 scoring average. Shepard handed out a career-high ten assists – one shy of the ECSU record in a conference tournament game – pushing him over the 100-assist mark (team-leading 106) for the season.

Saturday, February 16, 2002

ECSU M-BASKETBALL CLOSSES REGULAR SEASON WITH WIN
Warriors complete conference season sweep of Southern Maine, 70-60

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. -- Sophomore center **Michael Kipphut (MERIDEN)** hit a pair of key baskets and senior center **Billy Rea (WINSTED)** added a bucket and assist in a late six-point run which helped lift the Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team to a 70-60 Little East Conference victory over the University of Southern Maine Saturday at Francis E. Geissler Gymnasium.

Leading by four, 52-48 with 5:30 left, Eastern (13-12, 8-6) scored six straight points behind Kipphut and Rea -- each of whom also added a defensive rebound in that stretch - to move out to a ten-point, 58-48 lead with 3:24 left. Kipphut had replaced injured starting forward **Jason Leydon (MILFORD)** with 6:21 left and ECSU leading 62-57 .

Leading by nine with three minutes left, Eastern went to the free throw line 15 times, hitting enough (8) to maintain the lead. The Huskies (10-15, 4-10) missed five of seven three-pointers over that stretch in losing for the sixth straight time to Eastern, which had escaped with a 99-88 overtime win over the Huskies Jan. 12 at Gorham, ME.

Eastern finishes the regular season tied for fourth in the final conference standings with Plymouth State, which defeated Rhode Island College 88-64 Saturday. Fourth-seeded Plymouth will host fifth-seeded Eastern for the second straight year (the teams had the same seeds last year) in the first round of the conference tournament Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. at Foley Gymnasium. Plymouth's regular-season sweep of Eastern gave the Panthers the No. 4 seed. Tuesday's winner will advance to the tournament semifinals Friday at Keene State College. Despite the loss, Southern Maine earns the sixth and final seed to the conference tournament. The Huskies will visit ten-time conference tournament champion University of Massachusetts Dartmouth in a Tuesday first-round game.

Senior guard **Rich Vega (HARTFORD)** led Eastern with 18 points while Kipphut came off the bench to add 11 points (nine in the second half) on 5-for-7 shooting from the floor. Rea, the conference rebounding leader, shared game-high rebounding honors with 11 while sophomore guard **Gordon Shepard (WATERBURY)** offset 1-for-9 shooting from the floor by hitting all six of his free throws, grabbing seven rebounds and adding three assists, three steals and two blocked shots.

Southern Maine, which missed 27 of 36 three-point field goals, got 14 points, eight rebounds and four steals from freshman guard Mike Francoeur and nine points and 11 rebounds from sophomore forward Jeff White.

Tuesday, February 12, 2002

ECSU MEN'S BASKETBALL DROPS KEY LITTLE EAST DECISION

Western Conn. wins 10th in last 11 to gain split of home-and-home series

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. -- The Western Connecticut State University men's basketball team scored eight straight points midway through the second half to break open a close game on the way to an 82-68 Little East Conference victory over Eastern Connecticut State University Tuesday at Francis E. Geissler Gymnasium.

With the win, Western (17-6, 9-4) maintains a share of second place in the conference with one conference game remaining. Eastern (12-12, 7-6) maintains a share of fourth place in the standings with Plymouth State College with one conference game remaining for each team. The Panthers were beaten 83-64 by regular-season champion Keene State Tuesday.

The top two regular-season finishers earn first-round conference tournament byes while the third and fourth seeds host first-round games Tuesday. If ECSU finishes in a tie with Plymouth for fourth place, the Panthers gain the No. 4 seed based on its two regular-season wins over Eastern and would host the fifth-seeded Warriors Tuesday. Eastern can earn only the No. 4 or No. 5 seed in the tournament. Plymouth can secure the No. 4 seed by besting winless Rhode Island College Saturday, regardless of ECSU's decision Saturday against the University of Southern Maine.

Against Western, Eastern trailed by four points 56-52 before the visitors scored eight straight to move out to a 12-point, 64-52 lead with seven minutes left. In that stretch, Eastern missed eight straight field goals.

Western, whose only loss in its last 11 games came at the hands of Eastern by a score of 76-72 Jan. 22, got 17 points, five rebounds and four assists from senior Kevin Matthews and 14 points, nine rebounds and two blocked shots from sophomore Winston Grey. ECSU seniors **Rich Vega (HARTFORD)** and **Jason Leydon (MILFORD)** each had 17 points for Eastern. Leydon, who was 7-for-10 from the floor, added a game-high 11 rebounds.

Eastern closes out the regular season Saturday hosting the University of Southern Maine at 3 p.m.

Saturday, February 9, 2002

VEGA'S FTs CARRY ECSU MEN'S BASKETBALL PAST UMASS
Senior sinks record 22 as Warriors snap Corsairs' 26-game home streak

NORTH DARTMOUTH, Mass. -- Senior guard **Rich Vega (HARTFORD)** sank 22 free throws as the Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team snapped the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth's 26-game home court winning streak Saturday with a key 85-75 Little East Conference win at the Francis Tripp Athletic Center.

With two conference games remaining, Eastern (12-11, 7-5) remains in fourth place in the eight-team conference, one game behind the Corsairs (15-7, 8-4) and Western Connecticut State University. The top two teams in the final regular-season standings draw first-round byes in the conference tournament and the third and fourth seeds host first-round games.

UMass Dartmouth had not lost a home game since being beaten by Eastern in the semifinal-round of the 2000 conference tournament. Both of UMass Dartmouth's losses in their last 40 home games have come at the hands of Eastern, which snapped a streak of three straight conference losses with the win.

It marks the first time in the conference's 16-year history that Eastern has swept UMass Dartmouth in the season series. Eastern had won the first meeting this year, 75-72 at Geissler Gym.

Vega set program records for free throws made and attempted (28) in a regular-season conference game. Vega, who sank nine of ten free throws over the final seven minutes, broke his own program marks of 15 made free throws and 19 attempts, set last Jan. 27 against UMass Boston. The conference's top free-throw shooting team, Eastern sank 34 of 47 against the Corsairs, the second-most it has made and attempted in a regular-season conference game.

All but four of a game-high 26-point total came from the line for Vega, who managed only two points on free throws in the first half. Trailing by three, 38-35 moments into the second half, Eastern scored eight straight points -- five by Vega from the foul line -- to take a five-point, 43-38 lead. Leading 43-40 seven minutes into the half, the Warriors took control for good with a 16-6 run over three minutes to push the lead to 13, 59-46. Vega had six of the points and sophomore center **Michael Kipphut (MERIDEN)** added five, three coming on a 20-footer off a feed from Vega early in the run.

(more)

Twelve-time conference regular-season champion UMass Dartmouth, which had won seven of its previous eight and all nine of this year's home games, led by four points early in the game but Eastern scored eight straight -- six coming on three-point field goals by junior guard **Christopher Morgan (HIGGANUM)** and senior forward **Jason Leydon (MILFORD)** and two free throws by Vega -- to re-gain the momentum.

Senior center **Billy Rea (WINSTED)** had 17 points and 15 rebounds for Eastern while Morgan had 12 points and sophomore guard **Gordon Shepard (WATERBURY)** 13 points and seven rebounds. Ranked seventh among eight teams in the conference in rebounding margin, Eastern outrebounded the hosts 48-41. Chris Lapriore had 18 points and ten rebounds for UMass, which also got 15 points and nine rebounds from Brian Cagle, who was 7-for-10 from the floor.

Eastern hosts Western Connecticut Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. in a conference game. On Saturday, the Colonials became the first team to defeat conference leader Keene State with a 90-83 victory at Danbury.

Tuesday, February 5, 2002\ 6

KEENE MEN'S BASKETBALL WINS 11TH STRAIGHT LEC GAME
Eastern Conn. cuts 28-point deficit to nine before falling 76-65

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. -- Senior forward David Stantial had 27 points and ten rebounds to power the Keene State College men's basketball team to its 11th straight Little East Conference win, 76-65 victory over Eastern Connecticut State University Tuesday at Francis E. Geissler Gymnasium.

Rated sixth nationally in Division III, Keene (19-1, 11-0) raced to a 28-point 58-30 midway through the second half and scored its final seven points from the foul line after a run of ten straight points by Eastern had cut the gap to nine, 69-60 with 1:26 left.

The win is the 16th straight for Keene, which nailed down a first-round bye in the upcoming conference tournament as one of the top two finishers in the final standings. Keene is challenging to become the first conference team to go unbeaten in the regular season since UMass Dartmouth went 10-0 in 1992/93.

Eastern (11-11, 6-5) has dropped three of its last four and three straight conference games.

The Owls limited ECSU to just 20 first-half points, getting 12 from Stantial in the opening 20 minutes and nine from junior guard Derek Swenson. Sophomore guard Chris Timson followed Stantial in the game with 15 points and added a team-high 12 rebounds.

Sophomore guard **Gordon Shepard (WATERBURY)** led Eastern with 17 points, 15 coming in the second half. Shepard and senior guard **Rich Vega (HARTFORD)** combined to miss 14 of 15 field goals in the first half when Keene amassed a 14-point, 34-20 lead. Vega finished with 11 points. Senior center **Billy Rea (WINSTED)** grabbed 14 rebounds for Eastern, which was outrebounded 53-36. As a team, Eastern missed 24 of 30 three-point field goals and nine of 22 free throws but turned the ball over only eight times.

Eastern visits Massachusetts Dartmouth Saturday at 3 p.m.

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Saturday, February 2, 2002

ROBINSON LIFTS UMASS BOSTON OVER EASTERN CONN. 75-63
Sophomore sinks four key three-pointers in Little East men's basketball

BOSTON, Mass. -- Sophomore guard Lester Robinson sank four key three-pointers that helped the University of Massachusetts Boston down Eastern Connecticut State University 75-63 in Little East Conference men's basketball action Saturday at the Clark Athletic Center.

Robinson hit two three-pointers when UMass (8-13, 3-7) scored 13 straight points to wipe out an early nine-point deficit, then sank two more to help the Beacons stretch a five-point, 57-52 lead to nine, 63-54 with 5:33 left in the game.

After outscoring UMass Boston by 18 points from the free throw line in an 85-77 win January 5 at Willimantic, Eastern (11-10, 6-4) was outscored by ten in this game. The Beacons missed nine of 22 free throws but connected on 12 of 16 in a four-minute stretch late in the game. After hitting 26 of 31 in the earlier win over UMass, Eastern missed nine of 12 from the stripe in the game. The Warriors entered the week as the conference's top free-throw shooting team while UMass was seventh among eight teams.

Freshman guard Roger Perry (16 points), freshman post player Billy Allen (15) and Robinson (15) combined to shoot 16-for-30 from the floor. Robinson was 5-for-9 from three-point range. Allen also grabbed ten rebounds and blocked three shots.

The scoring of senior center **Billy Rea (WINSTED)**, junior guard **Christopher Morgan (HIGGANUM)** and senior guard **Rich Vega (HARTFORD)** powered the Warriors to an early 16-7 lead but the Beacons answered with 13 straight points to re-gain the momentum 20-16. The Warriors missed five shots and turned the ball over five times on ten possessions in that span.

Rea (15 points), Morgan (14) and Vega (12) finished in double figures for Eastern, which was outscored off the bench 31-5. Rea registered double figures in rebounds (11) for the fifth time in six games. Vega, who contributed a season-high nine assists, managed only three points in the second half, none after the first four minutes. Vega set the ECSU career scoring record in Tuesday's win at Endicott and exceeded the 1,500-point mark with his final points of this game. He has 1,501 points in 98 career games.

Eastern hosts conference leader Keene State College Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. The Owls won their tenth straight conference game Saturday, 91-61 over visiting Rhode Island College.

Tuesday, January 29, 2002

VEGA SETS ECSU MEN'S BASKETBALL SCORING RECORD

Senior guard breaks Rossie Covington's eight-year-old mark of 1,474

BEVERLY, Mass. -- Senior guard **Rich Vega (HARTFORD)** became the all-time leading scorer in the 62-year history of Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball Tuesday in the Warriors' 69-60 win over Endicott College.

Vega broke Rossie Covington's eight-year-old record of 1,474 points with 4:55 elapsed in the second half when he connected on a three-pointer from the right baseline. Vega, who scored 23 of his game-high 32 points in the second half, had tied the record with a three-point field goal 52 seconds earlier. He entered the game 17 points shy of Covington's point total, which was established in a 77-game career. The game was the 97th in the career of Vega, who brought a career scoring average of 15.2 into action. He now has 1,489 points.

"For Rich to become the leading scorer in the history of this program is an unbelievable achievement," praised eighth-year head coach Barry Davis. "When I recruited him, I thought that he would be the type of player who would make the other four players on the floor better. I didn't think that he was necessarily going to be the leading scorer on the team."

A six-foot, 155-pound point guard, Vega has missed only two games in his four-year career and has scored at least ten points in 45 of his last 48 games (he scored nine in each of the other three).

"Rich has never been what I consider to be a pure shooter," noted Davis, "but he's a scorer. He's always found a way to get the points when we've needed them."

Trailing by four, 27-23, Eastern (11-9) scored the final 11 points of the first half to take a seven-point, 34-27 lead into the lockerroom. Sophomore center **Michael Kipphut (MERIDEN)** scored four of the points and Vega added the second of his career-tying five three-point field goals in the run. After scoring nine points in the first half, Vega scored 15 of Eastern's first 18 points of the second half to lift the Warriors into a 16-point, 56-40 lead midway through the half. Vega converted a three-pointer, then a short jumper to open the ECSU second-half scoring, and after senior **Jason Leydon (MILFORD)** made a free throw, Vega drilled another three-pointer to tie Covington's all-time scoring record four minutes into the half. On ECSU's next possession, Vega took a pass from sophomore guard **Gordon Shepard (WATERBURY)** and buried a long three-pointer in front of the ECSU bench that gave the Warriors a 48-34 lead and gave him the scoring record.

Eastern visits Massachusetts Boston Saturday at 3 p.m.

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Saturday, January 26, 2002

PLYMOUTH COMPLETES SEASON SWEEP OF ECSU 79-67
Panthers outrebound Warriors 59-38 in Little East men's basketball

PLYMOUTH, NH -- Senior center Jason Blackburn had 20 points and a season-high 19 rebounds to spark the Plymouth State College men's basketball team to a 79-67 Little East Conference win over Eastern Connecticut State University Saturday at Foley Gymnasium.

The loss snaps a two-game winning streak for ECSU (10-9, 6-3), which entered play sharing second place in the conference. In winning its first home conference game after three losses, Plymouth improves to 11-7 overall, 5-4 and gains a sweep of the Warriors in the conference season series.

A field goal by sophomore guard **Gordon Shepard (WATERBURY)** and a three-pointer by senior forward **Jason Leydon (MILFORD)** had pulled the Warriors to within two points, 57-55 with eight minutes left before the Panthers scored seven of the next eight points to up the lead to eight, 64-56. Plymouth State junior guard Kenny Stewart scored six of those points by sinking a three-point field goal and converting a three-point play after grabbing an offensive rebound.

Blackburn, the team's only senior, helped his team dominate the boards with a 59-38 advantage. Junior forward Donnelle Combs contributed 16 points and nine rebounds and sophomore forward Frankie Finklea -- last year's conference Rookie-of-the-Year -- had 14 points and six rebounds.

The conference's top free-throw shooting team, Eastern missed 11 of 25 chances at the stripe while Plymouth was 19-for-30. Plymouth iced the win by converting six of eight tries in the final 50 seconds.

ECSU senior center **Billy Rea (WINSTED)** finished in double figures in rebounding for the fourth straight game. Rea had 14 points and ten rebounds while Shepard had a team-high 16 points with five rebounds and five assists. Leydon added 11 points.

ECSU senior guard **Rich Vega (HARTFORD)**, who had 11 points and a season-high ten rebounds, moved into second-place all-time in scoring at Eastern with 1,457 points -- 17 behind all-time leader Rossie Covington. After scoring eight points in the first half, Vega was silent from the floor after opening the second half with a driving layup.

Eastern visits Endicott College at 8 p.m.

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Tuesday, January 22, 2002

ECSU MEN'S BASKETBALL HOLDS OFF WESTERN CONN. 76-72
Vega sinks four free throws in final 50 seconds in Little East win

DANBURY, Conn. -- The Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team squandered a 14-point first-half lead but sank all six of its free throw tries in the final minute to record a 76-72 Little East Conference victory over Western Connecticut State University Tuesday at the William A. O'Neill Athletic and Convocation Center.

The win for Eastern (10-8, 6-2) snaps Western's (11-6, 4-4) four-game winning streak and hands the Colonials their first loss in eight home games this year. By winning, ECSU maintains a share of second place in the conference with Massachusetts Dartmouth, which drubbed Rhode Island College 90-52 Tuesday.

A 10-2 run helped the Warriors amass a 14-point first-half lead before the Colonials chipped away. With 1:16 left in the game, Western took its first lead since the early moments but the Warriors answered by sinking all six of their free throws over the final 58 seconds. Senior center **Billy Rea (WINSTED)** tied the game 72-all with a pair and senior guard **Rich Vega (HARTFORD)** converted four over the final 49 seconds to give ECSU its first win over Western after three straight losses.

The top-rated free throw-shooting team in the conference, Eastern hit 20 of 23 tries from the stripe. The second-best three-point shooting team in the conference, Western missed 21 of 24 three-point attempts, including all 13 in the second half.

Vega led all players with 20 points to move to within 29 points of setting an ECSU career scoring record. Rea finished in double figures in rebounding for the third straight game, grabbing a game-high 13.

Kevin Matthews led Western with 16 points, hitting seven of ten field goals.

Eastern visits conference foe Plymouth State Saturday at 3 p.m.

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little east conference

Saturday, January 19, 2002

ECSU MEN'S BASKETBALL NOW 5-2 IN LITTLE EAST

Warriors can 19 of 22 free throws in dumping Rhode Island 78-59

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. -- The Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team rolled up a 23-point lead seven minutes into the second half in posting a 78-59 Little East Conference win over Rhode Island College Saturday at Francis E. Geissler Gymnasium.

The win is the fifth in seven conference games for Eastern (9-8), which snapped a two-game losing streak. Rhode Island is 1-17 overall, 0-7 in the conference. Eastern, Massachusetts Dartmouth and Plymouth State all entered play sharing second place in the conference, two games behind leader Keene State. Massachusetts Dartmouth defeated Plymouth State 85-62 Saturday at North Dartmouth, MA to remain in a two-way tie with Eastern in second place.

Leading ^{by} 13 points, 41-28 at halftime, the Warriors limited the Anchormen to only one field goal (five points) over the first seven minutes of the second half in building a 23-point, 56-33 lead. Rhode Island missed six field goals and turned the ball over seven times in that stretch.

Ranked second in the conference in free throw percentage, Eastern improved its season mark to 72.3 by canning 19 of 22 tries. The Warriors were 14-for-17 in the second half. Senior guard **Rich Vega (HARTFORD)** sank all nine of his free throws and finished with a game-high 25 points to move past ECSU Hall of Famer Kevin Barboza into third place all-time with 1,426 points. Vega stands 27 points shy of second place and 48 shy of Rossie Covington's program-record of 1,474 points.

ECSU senior center **Billy Rea (WINSTED)** led both teams with 13 rebounds -- his tenth game this year of ten or more -- and also contributed a career-high five blocked shots (all in the first half).

Eastern visits Western Connecticut State University Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. in a Little East Conference game.

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WHEATON COLLEGE ATHLETICS

For Immediate Release- January 17, 2002

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Lyons Hold on to Capture 94-87 Victory against Eastern

NORTON, MA- Wheaton got back to its winning ways Thursday night, as the Lyons defeated Eastern Connecticut State University, 94-87 in non-conference men's basketball action in Emerson Gymnasium. Stopping a two-game skid, Wheaton improves to .500 at 7-7 overall. Suffering their second straight loss, the Warriors drop to .500 at 8-8 on the season.

The first half opened play with both teams battling through three ties in the first four minutes including a 9-9 knot with 15:47 to play. The Lyons then opened up their offense, scoring 12 unanswered points by four different Wheaton players in taking a 21-9 advantage with 13:17 to play. The Blue-and-White extended their lead to as many as 17 points on two occasions, as Eastern struggled from the field for most of the half, shooting at a .306 (11-36 FG) clip. The Lyons entered the locker room with a commanding 45-31 lead. Senior Luke Gordon (Worcester, MA/St. Peter Marian) provided Wheaton with 11 points in the opening half, while junior guard Chris Morgan (Higganum, CT/Haddam-Killingworth) gave the Warriors a needed spark off the bench with 12 points (4-5 FG) in 10 minutes.

The Lyons maintained their double-digit lead for the majority of the second stanza, including a pair of sizable 18-point advantages. Wheaton led 65-47 with 13:15 left in regulation, but Eastern didn't go away, as the Warriors mounted their comeback attempt. Eastern outscored the Lyons, 29-12 over a seven-minute span to cut the deficit to one (77-76) with just over six minutes to play. The Warriors did end up taking the lead at 78-77 and then held onto as big as a two-point advantage. However, Wheaton's long-range shooters heated up, as the Lyons' next three field goal conversions came from behind the three-point arc, with the most critical coming from Jarett Lewis (Detroit, MI/South Kent School) with 47 seconds to go to give Wheaton the lead for good. He added a falling away lay-up for good measure just twenty seconds later to lift the Lyons to victory.

Four Wheaton players posted double-figure scoring, led by Josean Vega (Pawtucket, RI/St. Raphael's) with 19 points (5-10 FG, 6-7 FT). Also in double-figures was Gordon with 18 points and six rebounds, sophomore center Richard Henninger (Duxbury, MA/Duxbury) with 14 points (6-7 FG) and first-year Mike Stanton (Lynnfield, MA/Brewster Academy) with 12 points (4-7 FG) and six rebounds. Junior Mike O'Hara (Pawtucket, RI/St. Raphael's) just missed a double-double performance with nine points and a game-high tying 12 rebounds in 14 minutes.

Five Eastern players hit double-figure scoring in the loss, as sophomore Gordon Shepard (Waterbury, CT/Holy Cross) led all scorers with 21 points in addition to his ten rebounds. Morgan added 18 points (6-8 FG), while senior Rich Vega (Hartford, CT/St. Thomas More) contributed 17 points, eight steals and seven rebounds. Senior Jason Leydon (Milford, CT/Joseph A. Foran) posted 13 points in the win, while senior center Billy Rea (Winsted, CT/The Gilbert School) recorded a double-double performance with 10 points and 12 boards.

The Lyons have the weekend off and will return to action next Tuesday night at home against the MIT Engineers in a New England Women's and Men's Athletic Conference (NEWMAC) contest, beginning at 7:00 p.m.

little east conference

Thursday, January 17, 2002

ECSU MEN'S BASKETBALL DROPS 94-87 DECISION

Warriors rally from 12-point halftime deficit before falling to Wheaton

NORTON, Mass. -- Jarett Lewis broke a tie with his only three-point field goal of the game with 48 seconds left to lift the Wheaton College men's basketball team to a 94-87 win over Eastern Connecticut State University Thursday.

Eastern (8-8) erased a 12-point halftime deficit -- getting 18 second-half points from sophomore guard **Gordon Shepard (WATERBURY)** -- by outscoring the Lyons (7-7) 16-4 over a three-minute stretch to surge in front 76-75 with six minutes left. With the score tied at 86, Lewis swished a three-pointer to put the Lyons ahead for good 89-86 with 48 seconds left. Senior guard **Rich Vega (HARTFORD)**, who scored 17 points to move into fourth place all-time at Eastern with 1,401 points, then hit one of two free throws with 38 seconds left to cut the gap to two, but Lewis dropped in an easy bucket ten seconds later to put the game away 91-87. Eastern missed two three-point field goals and Wheaton converted three of four free throws in the final 20 seconds.

Shepard led all scorers with 21 points and equalled his career high with ten rebounds. Junior guard **Christopher Morgan (HIGGANUM)** added 18 points (6-for-8 from the floor). Behind Vega's 17, senior forward **Jason Leydon (MILFORD)** had 13 and senior center **Billy Rea (WINSTED)** ten points and a team-high 12 rebounds.

Josean Vega led Wheaton with 19 points, Luke Gordon adding 18 for the Lyons, who snapped a two-game losing streak this year and a string of three straight losses to Eastern.

Eastern hosts Rhode Island College Saturday at 3 p.m. in a Little East Conference game.

Wheaton College (MA) 94, Eastern Conn. 87

EASTERN CONN. (8-8): Gordon Shepard 7-19 7-10 21; Rich Vega 5-19 6-8 17; Billy Rea 4-9 2-4 10; Jason Leydon 5-13 0-0 13; Michael Kipphut 2-4 0-1 4; Jamaal Lee 0-1 2-4 2; Anthony Simao 1-2 0-0 2; Christopher Morgan 6-8 4-5 18; Ryan Magee 0-2 0-0 0; TOTAL: 30-77 21-32 87.

WHEATON (7-7): Josean Vega 5-10 6-7 19; Luke Gordon 7-18 2-5 18; Richard Henninger 6-7 2-5 14; Mike Stanton 4-7 2-2 12; Sam Ackah 3-9 1-2 7; Jarett Lewis 3-7 1-2 8; Kenton Kirby 0-0 0-0 0; Frankie Whall 3-5 1-2 7; Michael O'Hara 4-7 1-2 9; Dan Noonan 0-2 0-0 0; TOTAL: 35-72 16-27 94.

Score at halftime: W 43-31.

Three-point field goals: E 6-20 (Leydon 3-6, Morgan 2-3, Vega 1-7, Lee 0-1, Shepard 0-3); W 8-24 (Vega 3-5, Stanton 2-4, Gordon 2-8, Lewis 1-4, Ackah 0-1,

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Tuesday, January 15, 2002

SLOW START COSTLY FOR ECSU BASKETBALL

Keene men jump to 23-4 lead in 98-78 conference loss

KEENE, NH – The Keene State College men's basketball team sank five three-point field goals in the opening six minutes in building a 23-4 lead en route to a 98-78 Little East Conference victory over Eastern Connecticut State University Tuesday at Spaulding Gymnasium.

Keene (11-1, 5-0), which entered play one-half game ahead of second-place Eastern (8-7, 4-2), stretched its winning streak to eight and handed the Warriors their first loss after four straight wins. ECSU had won three straight conference games.

The conference leader in seven of ten team categories – including scoring, defense, scoring margin and three-point field goal percentage -- Keene raced to a 19-point 23-4 lead just eight minutes into action before the Warriors surged back behind the play of sophomores **Gordon Shepard (WATERBURY)** and **Michael Kipphut (MERIDEN)**. Shepard scored ten of his 12 first-half points and Kipphut seven of his nine first-half points to key the rally as the Warriors battled back to within six 39-33 with 2:42 left in the first half.

Leading by nine, 47-38 at halftime, the Owls converted three more three-point field goals in the first six minutes of the second half to push the lead to 17, 68-51, then used a 9-2 run to put the game away, 77-53 with 9:21 left.

Chris Timson and David Stantial each had 20 points and combined for 21 rebounds for Keene, which totaled 11 three-pointers and outrebounded the Warriors 61-35. Timson, who was 7-for-10 from the floor, added seven assists and three steals. Stantial tossed in half of his ten three-point tries.

Shepard and Kipphut each had 19 for Eastern, Kipphut's total equaling his career high. Shepard added a career-high nine rebounds and collected five of the team's ten steals. Senior guards **Rich Vega (HARTFORD)** and **Jamaal Lee (JAMAICA, NY)** each finished with ten points. Vega, ranked fifth all-time at ECSU in career scoring, scored eight points from the free throw line, missing 13 of 14 shots from the floor.

Eastern visits Wheaton College (MA) Thursday at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, January 12, 2002

ECSU MEN'S BASKETBALL SURGES TO FOURTH STRAIGHT WIN
Warriors sink 15 of 18 free throws in overtime in 99-88 Little East victory

GORHAM, ME -- Senior forward **Jason Leydon (MILFORD)** sank six of his team's 15 free throws in overtime as the surging Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team won its fourth straight game, a 99-88 Little East Conference decision over the University of Southern Maine Saturday at the Warren G. Hill Gymnasium.

Eastern (8-6, 4-1) has now won its last three conference games and five of its last six overall and has beaten Southern Maine (6-8, 2-3) the last five times the clubs have met and six of the last seven times the teams have squared off at Gorham.

The Warriors trailed by nine with nine minutes left and by six with 6:39 left but surged back, tying the game with 24 seconds left when senior center **Billy Rea (WINSTED)** dropped in a layup on a pass from sophomore guard **Gordon Shepard (WATERBURY)**. With the clock winding down, Southern Maine was awarded a two-shot foul but the hosts missed both with two seconds left to force overtime. In overtime, Eastern, the conference's second-best free-throw shooting team, scored 15 of its 19 points on 18 free throw attempts. After the teams exchanged buckets, the Warriors scored 11 straight points to go up 93-82 with 54 seconds left. Eastern was 9-for-10 from the stripe over that stretch.

Leydon scored eight points in overtime, junior guard **Christopher Morgan (HIGGANUM)** six and Shepard the remaining five. Southern Maine had only one field goal in the first 4:17 of overtime before sinking two three-pointers in the last 43 seconds. Morgan also played a key role in carrying ECSU back from the nine-point deficit midway through the second half, hitting a three-point field goal and converting both ends of a one-and-one opportunity provided him when he was fouled while stealing the ball to cut the gap to four, 66-62 with 7:41 left.

Eastern broke its own team records in a Little East Conference regular-season game for free throws made (38) and attempted (50) while Leydon tied an individual mark by sinking all eight of his free throw attempts. A total of 60 fouls were called and a total of 80 free throws were attempted in the game.

The Warriors tied the game in the final minute and won in overtime after losing two starters with five personal fouls. Senior guard **Rich Vega (HARTFORD)** was disqualified with ECSU trailing 79-76 with 2:12 left and sophomore center **Michael Kipphut (MERIDEN)** went to the bench a minute later with the Warriors down 79-78.

Three Southern Maine players were dismissed with three personal fouls, starting guards Mike Francoeur with 3:21 left and Jeff White with 1:46 left in overtime and reserve guard Steve Estes with 19 seconds left in overtime.

Morgan recorded career-highs of 20 points and seven rebounds for Eastern, hitting five of nine field goals and eight of ten free throws; Shepard added 16 points (despite missing 12 of 15 field goals), seven rebounds and a career-high eight assists while Vega had 15 points, Kipphut 14, Leydon 13 and Rea 11 points and a game-high nine rebounds. Kipphut was 5-for-6 from the floor. ECSU outrebounded USM 48-31.

Eastern visits Keene State College Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. in a Little East Conference game.

little east conference

Tuesday, January 8, 2002

ECSU SNAPS HOME LOSING STREAK TO UMASS DARTMOUTH

Warriors end 11-game streak at home in downing Corsairs 75-72

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. --Sophomore guard **Gordon Shepard** (**WATERBURY**) hit a basket and free throw to give the Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team the lead for good and the Warriors sank 11 of 13 free throws down the stretch to post a 75-72 Little East Conference victory over the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Tuesday at Francis E. Geissler Gymnasium.

The win snaps Eastern's (7-6, 3-1) 11-game home losing streak at the hands of the Corsairs (8-4, 3-1), who had last lost to ECSU at Geissler Gym 71-62 Feb. 8, 1990. Eastern has won four of its last five this year.

Shepard, who had 12 points, hit a driving basket and a layup to give ECSU the lead for good, 64-62 with two minutes left and senior guard **Rich Vega** (**HARTFORD**) converted nine of ten free throws over the final 66 seconds.

Eastern, which has the second-best free-throw percentage in the conference, sank 18 of 25 in the game -- Vega hitting 11 of 14 -- while the Corsairs missed 15 of 33. The Corsairs, who have won 12 of 15 regular-season conference titles, missed 12 of 21 free throws in the second half and seven of eight three-point tries.

Vega led all scorers with 28 points -- 21 coming in the second half -- to move ahead of Ron Pires (1,342) into fifth place all-time on the ECSU career scoring chart with 1,359 points (115 behind all-time leader Rossie Covington). Vega, the conference scoring leader, canned seven of 12 field goals in the game and also had six steals.

Senior forward **Jason Leydon** (**MILFORD**) matched his season high with 17 points for Eastern while senior forward **Billy Rea** (**WINSTED**) grabbed ten rebounds -- eight in the second half.

Freshman forward Chris Lapriore led UMass with 17 points while Ivan Britto had 11, junior guard Tim Gaspar ten points, seven rebounds, five steals and four assists. Junior forward Brian Cagle, ranked fifth in the conference in scoring (15.5) scored five points.

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

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Saturday, January 5, 2002

VEGA LEADS ECSU MEN'S BASKETBALL PAST UMASS
Senior guard scores 35 points Little East Conference victory

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. -- Senior guard Rich Vega (HARTFORD) scored a season-high 35 points to lead the Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team to an 85-77 Little East Conference victory over the University of Massachusetts Boston Saturday at Francis E. Geissler Gymnasium.

The win is the fourth straight over UMass (4-7, 1-2) for Eastern (6-6, 2-1), which was playing its third game in four days.

Leading by one, 29-28, Eastern scored eight straight points to move out to a nine-point, 37-28 lead with two minutes left in the first half. The Warriors led by as many as 18 in the second half, and after the Beacons sliced the lead to six, 76-70, ECSU sank seven of eight free throws over the final 1:46 of the game. Vega was 6-for-6 from the stripe in that stretch.

Vega, ranked sixth all-time in scoring at Eastern with 1,331 points, converted nine of 12 field goals (3-of-5 from "three") and 14 of 16 free throws en route to his game-high point total. He also had four rebounds and four assists. It was the third 30-plus point game in the career of Vega, who had scored 38 points last Jan. 23 against Keene State and 37 four days later against UMass Boston. Vega's 35 points in this game were seven shy of the game record set 45 years ago by Frank Johndrow, whom Vega passed in this game to move into sixth place all-time in career scoring.

Eastern hosts 12-time conference regular-season champion University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.

Eastern Conn. 85, Massachusetts Boston 77

UMASS BOSTON (4-7, 1-2): Olavo Billy Gomes 1-4 2-2 4; Roger Perry 3-9 4-6 11; Lester Robinson 9-18 0-0 20; Billy Allen 6-9 1-2 13; Obi Amaefule 8-13 1-3 17; Yassin Osman 0-2 0-0 0; Geoff Ponitz 1-7 0-0 2; Joe Guertin 2-5 0-0 4; Paul Kemp 2-3 0-0 4; Jake Luhn 0-0 0-0 0; Eric Summerville 1-2 0-0 2; TOTAL: 33-728-14 77.

EASTERN CONN. (6-6, 2-1): Gordon Shepard 4-13 5-6 13; Jason Leydon 5-10 0-0 12; Rich Vega 9-12 14-16 35; Michael Kipphut 4-7 2-2 10; Billy Rea 2-7 2-3 6; Christopher Morgan 2-4 3-4 9; Jamaal Lee 0-1 0-0 0; Jordan Molta 0-0 0-0 0; Ryan Magee 0-1 0-0 0; TOTAL: 26-55 26-31 85.

Score at halftime: E 37-30.

Three-point field goals: MB 3-9 (Robinson 2-6, Perry 1-3); E 7-13 (Vega 3-5, Leydon 2-4, Morgan 2-3, Shepard 0-1); Rebounds: MB 36 (Allen 8, Amaefule 7); E 32 (Rea 8, Leydon, Vega, Kipphut 4); Assists: MB 14 (Gomes 12); E 17 (Shepard 5, Vega 4).

- Thursday, January 3, 2002

ECSU MEN'S BASKETBALL ROUTS AVERETT COLLEGE 87-54
Warriors hold Cougars scoreless from floor for first seven minutes

SALEM, VA -- The Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team held Averett College scoreless from the floor through the first seven minutes in building a 16-2 lead en route to an 87-54 win Thursday to finish third in the Ninth Annual Jimmy V Foundation Classic, hosted by Roanoke College.

Eastern (5-6), coming off Wednesday's 75-66 first-round loss to Roanoke, raced to the early 16-2 lead behind seven points from senior guard **Rich Vega (HARTFORD)**, pushed the advantage to 24, 46-22 by the half and never let the Cougars (2-8) get closer than 23 in the second half. The final 33-point margin was the largest of the game. Host Roanoke (6-4) defeated Savannah College of Art and Design (10-7) in Thursday's championship game to win its eighth tournament title.

Eastern shot 62.1 per cent from the floor in the first half, sinking five of 11 three-point field goals. Eastern's pressure defense forced Averett into 21.6 per cent shooting from the floor in the first half, 24.3 per cent in the game.

Vega and sophomore center **Michael Kipphut (MERIDEN)** each had 19 points for Eastern, with sophomore guard **Gordon Shepard (WATERBURY)** adding 15 and senior center **Billy Rea (WINSTED)** 13 points and a game-high ten rebounds. Kipphut, playing his second game of the season, was 8-for-11 from the floor and added four blocked shots and four steals. Shepard had a career-high seven assists for Eastern, which handed out 21 as a team. The Warriors' five starters each shot 50 per cent or better from the field.

Averett's Masa Kaminen, who had come off the bench to score a team-high 18 points (6-for-9 from three) in Wednesday's 69-61 first-round loss, was held scoreless from the floor on four shots.

Eastern returns to Little East Conference action Saturday, hosting Massachusetts at 3 p.m.

Eastern Conn. 87, Averett College 54

AVERETT (2-8): Joey Barksdale 2-7 0-0 4; Masa Kaminen 0-4 0-0 0; Darryl Lanier 1-6 0-0 2; Brantley Shields 4-12 1-1 11; Jermaine Coston 2-9 2-2 6; Andre Gillis 1-3 0-0 2; Charles Holloway 0-7 6-6 6; Jerrod Harris 1-4 1-1 3; Kashif Johnson 0-0 0-0 0; Justin Ballou 0-2 0-0 0; Derrick Rogers 4-9 2-2 12; Teron McFadden 2-7 4-5 8; **TOTAL: 17-70 16-17 54**

EASTERN CONN. (5-6): Gordon Shepard 6-11 2-5 15; Jason Leydon 3-6 1-2 8; Rich Vega 6-10 5-5 19; Michael Kipphut 8-11 2-2 19; Billy Rea 5-9 3-4 13; Dan Haynes 0-1 0-0 0; Christopher Morgan 2-3 4-4 9; Jamaal Lee 0-3 0-0 0; Jordan Molta 1-3 0-0 2; Ryan Magee 1-4 0-0 2; **TOTAL: 32-61 17-22 87.**

Score at halftime: E 46-22.

Three-point field goals: A 4-12 (Shields 2-3, Rogers 2-4, Holloway 0-2, Kaminen 0-2, Lanier 0-1); E 6-17 (Vega 2-4, Shepard 1-2, Kipphut 1-2, Morgan 1-2, Leydon 1-4, Rea 0-1, Lee 0-1, Molta 0-1); Rebounds: A 40 (Coston 8, Lanier 5, Shields 5); E 42 (Rea 10, Leydon 9); Assists: A 8 (Rogers 2, McFadden 2); E 21 (Shepard 7, Vega 4)

Wednesday, January 2, 2002

ECSU MEN'S BASKETBALL RALLY FALLS SHORT IN 75-66 LOSS
Warriors beaten by host Roanoke in opening round of Jimmy V Classic

SALEM, VA -- The Roanoke College men's basketball team converted eight free throws in the final 85 seconds to hang on for a 75-66 win over Eastern Connecticut State University Wednesday in the opening round of its own Ninth Annual Jimmy V Foundation Classic.

Roanoke (5-4) is scheduled to face Savannah College of Art and Design (10-6) in Thursday's championship round at 7:30 p.m. Eastern (4-6) will meet Averett College (2-7) in the 5 p.m. consolation game. Roanoke has seeking its eighth tournament title, fourth straight.

Trailing by 22, 56-34 with 11 minutes left, Eastern controlled the tempo over the next nine minutes, limiting the Maroons to just six points from the floor in a 28-11 run that cut the deficit to five, 67-62 with 1:44 left. ECSU senior guard **Rich Vega (HARTFORD)**, who missed his first 11 shots from the floor, scored ten points in that stretch, sinking a pair of free throws to cap the run and slice the deficit to five. Roanoke, which advanced to the second round of last year's NCAA Division III tournament, hit nine of 12 free throws the rest of the way, however, to pull away down the stretch.

In the game, Roanoke sank 14 of 23 free throws while ECSU missed nine of 16.

Roanoke junior guard Robby Pridgen, hit nine of 12 free throws in the second half en route to a game-high 23 oints. Pridgen totalled six of his team's eight free throws over the final 85 seconds.

The Maroons built an 18-point lead after scoring the final nine points of the first half and the first six points of the second half to move out to a 43-25 lead three minutes into the second half. Sophomore forward Jason Graffam, who had a team-high 11 rebounds in the game, scored six of his eight points in that stretch to key the burst.

ECSU sophomore guard **Gordon Shepard (WATERBURY)** finished in double figures for the ninth time this year, scoring 19 points, with senior guard **Jason Leydon (MILFORD)** and Vega each had 16. Shepard and Leydon combined to shoot 50 per cent (15-for-30) from the floor. Sophomore center **Michael Kipphut (MERIDEN)** grabbed a career-high 12 rebounds in his season debut while senior forward **Billy Rea (WINSTED)** had nine and Vega a season-high eight. With his point total, Vega moved into seventh place all-time with 1,277 points, overtaking ECSU Hall of Famer Paul Kaminski (1,263). Rossie Covington's 1,474 points are the most in program history.

Roanoke College 75, Eastern Conn. 66

EASTERN CONN. (4-6): Gordon Shepard 8-17 0-1 19; Jason Leydon 7-13 1-1 16; Rich Vega 6-22 4-8 16; Michael Kipphut 3-9 1-4 7; Billy Rea 2-9 1-2 5; Dan Haynes 0-0 0-0 0; Christopher Morgan 1-5 0-0 3; Jamaal Lee 0-1 0-0 0; Ryan Magee 0-0 0-0 0; TOTAL: 27-76 7-16 66.

ROANOKE (5-4): Jason Graffam 4-10 0-3 8; Robby Pridgen 6-14 9-12 23; Jaimar Mansel 4-7 3-3 13; Josh Foster 7-16 2-5 16; Heath Puckett 1-5 0-0 10; Kevinn Hunter 0-0 0-0 0; Mikal Townsend 2-6 0-0 5; John Rutledge 0-0 0-0 0; Bryan Fasnacht 2-7 0-0 5; Drew Crowder 1-3 0-0 2; Nathan Stewart 1-2 0-0 2; TOTAL: 28-70 14-23 75.

Score at halftime: R, 37-25.

Three-point field goals: E 5-25 (Shepard 3-6, Leydon 1-6, Morgan 1-3, Vega 0-6, Rea 0-3, Lee 0-1), R 5-23 (Pridgen 2-6, Mansel 2-4, Fasnacht 1-3, Graffam 0-3, Foster 0-3; Townsend 0-2, Foster 0-2); Rebounds: E 48 (Kipphut 12, Rea 9, Vega 8), R 51 (Graffam 11, Puckett 10); Assists: E 12 (Kipphut 4); R 13 (Stewart 3).

Tuesday, December 11, 2001

VEGA'S LAST-SECOND SHOT LIFTS ECSU MEN'S BASKETBALL
Senior's bank shot with six seconds left gives Warriors 70-69 win over Conn

NEW LONDON, Conn. -- Senior guard **Rich Vega (HARTFORD)** sank a running bank shot with six seconds left to lift the Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team to a 70-69 victory over Connecticut College Tuesday at the Charles B. Luce Field House.

Trailing 69-64 with six minutes left, Eastern (4-5) scored the final six points of the game to snap a two-game losing streak in the first meeting between the schools in nine years. The loss snapped Conn College's (5-4) three-game winning streak.

Senior forward **Jason Leydon (MILFORD)** hit a bucket and free throw to cut the Conn lead to two, 69-67 with 4:28 left and Vega sank one of two free throws with 45 seconds left to make it a one-point difference 69-68 with 45 seconds left. With the shot clock winding down, the Camels couldn't click on a shot on their next possession. The Warriors rebounded the miss and drove the length of the floor, with Vega banking in the winning shot with six seconds left. Conn's last-second shot bounded off the rim as the horn sounded.

Trailing by 11, 36-25 late in the first half, Eastern scored 15 of the final 19 points of the half to cut the deficit to three, 43-40 at the break.

Vega led all players with a season-high 27 points, hitting 12 of 15 free throws for the Warriors, who converted 15 of 20 from the stripe. Vega's point total vaulted him from tenth place into eighth place all-time with 1,261 points. He is two points behind Paul Kaminski (1947-51) for seventh place and 213 behind all-time leader Rossie Covington (1991-94).

Leydon and senior center **Billy Rea (WINSTED)** each finished with ten points, with Leydon grabbing a game-high nine rebounds. Senior forward Rich Futia scored a team-high 25 points for Conn, sinking 12 of 17 field goals. As a team, Conn missed six of 13 free throws.

Eastern faces host Roanoke College Jan. 2 at 7:30 p.m. in the opening round of the V Foundation Classic.

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little east conference

Saturday, December 8, 2001

PLYMOUTH MEN'S BASKETBALL ROUTS ECSU IN LITTLE EAST
Panthers open second half with 28-4 run in posting 94-72 victory

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. -- Seven different players contributed to the scoring when the Plymouth State College men's basketball team scored 28 points in the first nine minutes of the second half and coasted to a 94-72 Little East Conference men's basketball win over Eastern Connecticut State University Saturday at Francis E. Geissler Gymnasium.

Leading by 11, 45-34 at halftime, Plymouth (5-2, 1-1) scored the first 14 points of the second half -- holding ECSU (3-5, 1-1) scoreless through the first six minutes -- en route to a 28-4 run which boasted the lead to 35, 73-38 with 10:44 left in the game.

Sophomore forward Frankie Finklea of Plymouth -- last year's conference Rookie-of-the-Year -- led all players with 21 points -- hitting seven of ten field goals -- as the Panthers shot 51.6 per cent from the floor. Both teams were an identical 25-for-30 from the foul line.

First-year junior forward Donnelle Combs scored 15 points for Plymouth, converting six of seven field goals and added six rebounds while sophomore center Ryan Chicoine had nine points and nine rebounds.

Sophomore guard **Gordon Shepard (WATERBURY)** led ECSU with 16 points and five assists, senior guard **Rich Vega (HARTFORD)** contributing 15 points and senior **Jason Leydon (MILFORD)** ten.

Eastern visits Connecticut College Tuesday at 7 p.m.

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Sophomore guard **Gordon Shepard (WATERBURY)** led ECSU with 16 points and five assists, senior guard **Rich Vega (HARTFORD)** contributing 15 points and senior **Jason Leydon (MILFORD)** ten.

Eastern visits Connecticut College Tuesday at 7 p.m. --

Plymouth State 94, Eastern Conn. 72

~~PLYMOUTH STATE (5-2, 1-1): Nick Pelotte 2-5 9-10 13; Mike Loughlin 4-9 0-0 9; Harold Roy 0-2 0-0 0; Frankie Finklea 7-10 4-4 21; Matt Budrow 2-5 0-1 4; Kenny Stewart 2-8 1-1 5; Jason Pridemore 1-2 4-4 6; Ryan Chicoine 4-6 1-2 9; Jason Blackburn 3-5 2-2 8; Donnelle Combs 6-7 3-4 15; Mike Reynolds 0-0 0-0 0; Dan Craig 0-0 0-0 0; Mike Kalbfell 1-1 0-0 3; Rob Nugent 0-2 1-2 4; TOTAL: 32-62 25-30 94.~~

~~EASTERN CONN. (3-5, 1-1): Gordon Shepard 3-13 8-8 16; Jason Leydon 2-7 6-8 10; Rich Vega 4-19 5-6 15; Dan Haynes 1-1 4-5 6; Christopher Morgan 2-6 0-0 6; Jordan Molta 2-4 1-1 6; Ed Borges 2-6 0-0 4; Billy Rea 3-10 0-0 6; Ryan Magee 1-4 1-2 3. Score at halftime: P 45-34.~~

~~Three-point field goals: P 5-13 (Finklea 3-4, Kalbfell 1-1, Loughlin 1-2, Budrow 0-3, Stewart 0-2, Pelotte 0-1) E 7-22 (Vega 2-5, Shepard 2-4, Morgan 2-4, Molta 1-1, Magee 0-1, Borges 0-3, Leydon 0-4), Assists: P 8 (Pelotte 2, Loughlin 2, Blackburn 2); E 11 (Shepard 5).~~

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RUSSELL LEADS ALBERTUS MAGNUS PAST ECSU 92-87
Freshman scores 30 points to lead Falcons to first victory

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. -- Freshman Tim Russell scored a game-high 30 points and classmate Sharon Blizzard added 20 points and 11 rebounds to lead the Albertus Magnus College men's basketball team to a 92-87 victory over Eastern Connecticut State University Thursday at Francis E. Geissler Gymnasium.

The win is the first this season for Albertus (1-5) and first after 12 losses at the hands of Eastern (3-4).

Eastern committed only five turnovers but shot just 34.1 per cent from the floor and the Falcons sank 27 of 40 free throws. Russell converted ten of 18 field goals and eight of nine from the foul line. Junior Jayson Douthwright had 13 points and ten rebounds before fouling out with 1:25 left with his team leading 78-72.

The Falcons used two spurts to put the Warriors into a hole. Albertus scored ten straight points late in the first half to move out to a 39-36 halftime lead, then outscored ECSU 9-1 to push a one-point, 69-68 lead to nine, 78-69 with 1:34 left. Trailing by eight, 81-73 with one minute left, ECSU sank four consecutive three-pointers and had an opportunity to tie the game with ten seconds left but a three-pointer hit off the front of the iron and was rebounded by Albertus junior Xzavier Williams. Albertus took 23 free throw over the final 2:08, hitting 16, to offset ECSU's three-point success. Senior Nick Polce and Williams each sank two free throws 10 seconds apart to give Albertus a five-point cushion 90-85 with 9.9 seconds left.

Sophomore **Gordon Shepard (WATERBURY)** scored a career-high 23 points and senior **Billy Rea (WINSTED)** had ten points and a season-high 18 rebounds for Eastern, which also got 17 points from senior **Rich Vega (HARTFORD)** and 12 points and career-high 12 rebounds from senior **Jason Leydon (MILFORD)**. Vega scored all of his points in the second half.

Eastern hosts Plymouth State College Saturday at 3 p.m. in a Little East Conference game.

Albertus Magnus 92, Eastern Conn. 87

ALBERTUS (1-5): Justin Williams 0-0 0-0 0; Mike Smith 0-0 0-0 0; Jeff Raponey 0-1 0-0 0; Norris Palma 0-2 0-0 0; Xzavier Williams 3-6 4-5 10; Curtis Miller 2-8 2-5 6; Nick Polce 2-5 9-10 13; Terence Johnson 0-0 0-2 0; Jayson Douthwright 5-14 0-0 13; Tim Russell 10-18 8-9 30; Sharod Blizzard 8-15 4-9 20; TOTAL: 30-69 27-40 92.

EASTERN CONN. (3-4): Gordon Shepard 9-19 3-4 23; Jason Leydon 5-12 1-2 12; Rich Vega 5-19 6-9 17; Dan Haynes 0-1 0-0 0; Christopher Morgan 2-8 0-0 6; Tony White 3-14 1-3 9; Jordon Molta 0-1 0-0 0; Ed Borges 4-4 1-2 10; Billy Rea 3-13 4-6 10; TOTAL: 31-91 16-26 87.

Score at halftime: A, 39-33.

Three-point field goals: A 5-14 (Douthwright 3-7, Russell 2-3, Williams 0-2, Miller 0-2); E 9-28 (Shepard 2-6, Morgan 2-5, White 2-7, Leydon 1-2, Vega 1-6, Borges 1-1, Molta 0-1); Rebounds: A 53 (Blizzard 11, Douthwright 10, Polce 8); E 48 (Rea 18, Leydon 12); Assists: A 8 (Miller 3), E 13 (Shepard 4).

Eastern Conn. 65, Clark U. 57

CLARK U. (5-2): Abby Pineo 1-2 0-0 2; Rachael Turkington 5-23 0-2 13; Elissa Larrivee 0-4 0-0 0; Heather Kamyck 3-10 0-2 6; Kristen Tebbetts 1-2 0-0 2; Chivon Markland 5-11 0-0 10; Erin Morrison 1-1 0-0 2; Tracy Fuller 1-3 2-2 4; Echo Freeman 4-8 0-0 8; Briana Freeman 2-7 2-4 6; Liz Baumann 0-2 0-0 0; Meghan Donnelly 2-4 0-0 4; Meghan O'Connell 0-0 0-0 0; TOTAL: 25-77 4-10 57.

EASTERN CONN. (6-0): Jamie Rosso 1-3 0-0 2; Kathleen Burdelski 4-11 6-8 14; Darcy Mund 1-10 4-4 7; Deanne Prior 7-11 4-10 18; Jen Bergeron 0-2 0-0 0; Allison Coleman 6-20 3-4 17; Joanna Debicki 2-15 2-4 7; TOTAL: 21-72 19-30 65.

Score at halftime: E, 30-23.

Three-point field goals: C 3-18 (Turkington 3-14, Kamyck 0-2, Pineo 0-1, Donnelly 0-1); E 4-14 (Coleman 2-6, Debicki 1-5, Mund 1-2); Rebounds: C 57 (Markland 14), E 50 (Burdelski 13, Coleman 11); Assists: C 15 (Turkington 6), E 9 (Coleman 4).

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little east conference

Tuesday, December 4, 2001

ECSU MEN'S BASKETBALL ROUTS WORCESTER STATE 73-51 *Warriors run off 18 straight points in first half en route to victory*

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. -- Senior forward **Jason Leydon (MILFORD)** scored seven points to spark an 18-0 run in the first half that propelled the Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team to a 73-51 win over Worcester State College Tuesday at Francis E. Geissler Gymnasium.

Leading 14-12, Eastern ran off the next 18 points of the game over a five-minute stretch that lifted the Warriors into a 20-point, 32-12 lead with 2:47 left in the first half. Leydon started the streak when his free throw completed a three-point play.

The win is ECSU's (3-3) second straight and snaps a two-game losing streak at the hands of the Lancers (1-6). Worcester's final point total is the lowest by either team in this 21-game series.

The Warriors were outrebounded by 13 but forced 30 Worcester State turnovers and sank 23 of 40 free throws. Eastern has converted 44 of 61 free throws in its last two wins.

Senior center **Billy Rea (WINSTED)** had a team-high ten rebounds to lead ECSU in that department for the fifth time in six games. Leydon led ECSU with 15 points, sophomore guard **Gordon Shepard (WATERBURY)** adding 12 points and a career-high eight rebounds, Rea 11 points and freshman guard **Jordan Molta (SOUTHWICK, MA)** a career-high ten.

Freshman Eric Rhynhart led Worcester with 20 points, 16 rebounds and two blocked shots.

Eastern hosts Albertus Magnus College Thursday at 8 p.m.

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Saturday, December 1, 2001

ECSU MEN'S BASKETBALL RALLIES PAST RIC 82-74
Warriors erase 13-point deficit to post Little East Conference victory

PROVIDENCE, RI --Backcourt starters **Gordon Shepard (WATERBURY)**, **Rich Vega (HARTFORD)** and **Tony White (HEMPSTEAD, NY)** combined for 49 points, 11 rebounds and 11 assists in helping the Eastern Connecticut State University men's basketball team to an 82-74 win over Rhode Island College Saturday in the Little East Conference opener for both teams.

After trailing by 13 points, Eastern (2-3, 1-0) scored the final 12 points of the first half and took its first lead of the game with the first bucket of the second half, then converted nine of ten free throws over the final two minutes to maintain the lead. Rhode Island (0-6, 0-1 had beaten ECSU twice a year ago by a total of nine points.

Vega led all scorers by tying his season high with 21 points and also adding six rebounds, six assists and two steals. Vega hit both ends of a key one-one-one free-throw opportunity to give ECSU a 75-68 lead with 2:13 left. Shepard had 17 points, five rebounds, three assists and three steals and canned all eight of his free throws. He sank both ends of a one-and-one try with 53 seconds left after Rhode Island had pulled to within three, 75-72 with one minute left. White contributed 11 points, two assists and two steals.

Senior center **Billy Rea (WINSTED)** had 13 points and shared game-high rebounding honors with ten.

ECSU was 21-for-31 from the foul line -- 14-for-17 in the second half -- while the hosts missed ten of 18 tries.

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

Eastern Conn. 82, Rhode Island College 74

EASTERN CONN. (2-3, 1-0): Gordon Shepard 4-9 8-8 17; Rich Vega 6-10 6-10 21; Tony White 5-13 1-3 11; Jason Leydon 3-9 2-2 8; Billy Rea 5-10 3-6 13; Christopher Morgan 2-5 1-2 6; Jordan Molta 2-2 0-0 4; Ryan Magee 1-2 0-0 2; Ed Borges 0-0 0-0 0; TOTAL: 28-60 21-31 82.

R.I. COLLEGE (0-6, 0-1): Eric Britto 5-8 1-2 13; Pete Mollo 4-10 0-1 ; Kevin Payette 2-4 0-0 6; Kurt Gorter 5-6 1-5 11; Jason Harris 5-12 2-2 12; Greg Bushey 2-3 0-0 4; Ian Robertson 1-2 0-2 2; Mike Costigan 1-3 3-4 5; Evan Bryant 3-8 1-2 8; James Heady 2-7 0-0 5; Raleigh Brennan 0-0 0-0 0; TOTAL: 30-63 8-18 74.

Score at halftime: R, 40-39.

Three-point field goals: E 5-14 (Vega 3-4, Shepard 1-2, Morgan 1-2, White 0-3, Leydon 0-3); R 6-19 (Britto 2-3, Payette 2-3, Bryant 1-5, Heady 1-4, Mollo 0-2, Costigan 0-2); Rebounds: E 31 (Rea 10, Vega 6); R 41 (Harris 10, Gorter 7); Assists: E 18 (Vega 6, Morgan 4); 20 (Mollo, Costigan 4).

little east conference

Wednesday, November 28, 2001

ECSU MEN'S BASKETBALL FALLS TO WESLEYAN 102-87 *Cardinals score 12 straight early points to remain unbeaten*

MIDDLETOWN, Conn. -- Chris Bray keyed a run of 12 straight Wesleyan University points in the opening minutes of play that propelled the Cardinals to a 102-87 men's basketball victory over Eastern Connecticut State University Wednesday.

Wesleyan (4-0), which led from start to finish, raced from a one-point lead to a 13-point margin (19-6) by scoring 12 straight points, five coming from Bray on a three-point play and, minutes later, a pair of free throws.

The teams played to a 62-all draw in the second half -- both teams hitting well over half of their field goal tries -- after the Cardinals had built a 15-point, 40-25 lead at the half. Wesleyan scored the first four points of the second to push the lead to 19, 44-25. The Warriors (1-3) managed to cut the lead to ten 94-84 with just over a minute left after sophomore guard **Gordon Shepard (WATERBURY)** scored nine points in two minutes.

A balanced effort on the boards -- led by Chad Gordon's ten rebounds-- helped the Cardinals to a decisive 47-31 rebounding advantage .

Kanem Johnson of Wesleyan led all players with 31 points (13-for-17 from the floor), with all of his points coming underneath. Bray had 21 points and eight rebounds and Gordon added ten points to go along with his game-high rebounding mark before fouling out with 2:45 left.

Shepard scored a career-high 23 points and added five assists for Eastern, which got all but 11 of its points from its starters. Junior guard **Tony White (HEMPSTEAD, NY)** contributed 20 points, junior guard **Christopher Morgan (HIGGANUM)** a career-high 13 points in his first career start. ECSU senior center **Billy Rea (WINSTED)** was limited to four points from the floor (ten overall). Rea, who played only six minutes in the first half due to foul trouble, scored his first points from the floor on a tip-in with seven minutes left.

Wesleyan scoring and rebounding leader Leo Jones played only the second half due to a pulled hamstring muscle but finished with 14 points and six rebounds in 20 minutes.

Eastern opens Little East Conference play Saturday at 3 p.m. at Rhode Island College.

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little east conference

Tuesday, November 20, 2001

TABB, DION POWER TRINITY PAST ECSU MEN'S BASKETBALL *Duo combines for 51 points and 20 rebounds and hits all 12 free throws in 87-75 win*

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. -- Seniors Colin Tabb and Bryan Dion combined for 51 points and 20 rebounds and were perfect in taking all 12 of their team's free throws as the Trinity College men's basketball team dumped Eastern Connecticut State University 87-75 Tuesday at Francis E. Geissler Gymnasium.

Trinity (2-1) limited ECSU (1-2) to one field goal and eight total points over the first ten minutes of the second half to race from a two-point halftime lead to a 21-point, 63-42 advantage. Tabb spearheaded the 27-8 run over those first ten minutes by scoring 13 points, hitting two three-point field goals and converting a conventional three-point play in the run as the Bantams pulled away.

Tabb had a game-high 30 points -- sinking four of eight three-pointers -- and added nine rebounds while Dion had 21 points and a game-high 11 rebounds. Each was 6-for-6 from the free throw line, taking and hitting all of their team's chances. Trinity outrebounded ECSU 46-27.

Eastern, which had hit 16 of 27 three-pointers in Saturday's 78-55 win over Westfield State, missed 14 of 17 three-pointers against Trinity.

Juniors **Tony White (HEMPSTEAD, NY)** and sophomore **Gordon Shepard (WATERBURY)** each posted career-high scoring totals for Eastern. White had 22 points (8-for-11 from the floor) and Shepard 19 points, five assists and four steals. Senior **Billy Rea (WINSTED)** led ECSU with seven rebounds.

Eastern visits Wesleyan University Wednesday, November 28 at 7:30 p.m.

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little east conference

Saturday, November 17, 2001

ITHACA RUNS PAST SALVE TO CLAIM ECSU TIP-OFF TITLE
Bombers use run of 15 straight points to win second title 63-55

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. -- Five different players contributed points in a 15-0 run midway through the second half to power the Ithaca College men's basketball team to a 63-55 win over Salve Regina University Saturday in the title game of the 21st Annual Nancy K. Sulinski '76 Memorial Basketball Tournament, hosted by Eastern Connecticut State University at Francis E. Geissler Gymnasium.

The tournament championship is the second in four appearances for Ithaca (2-0), which won the inaugural title in 1980. Ithaca had last appeared in the tournament in 1992, when it placed third.

Trailing by two, 36-34 four minutes into the second half, Ithaca scored 15 straight points over the next seven minutes to move out to a 49-36 advantage. The lead never dipped below eight points thereafter.

Jason Wallen and Will Hill each had four points in the run while Matthew Miller converted a three-point field goal to make it a ten-point lead 46-36 with 11:31 left.

Tyler Schulz of Ithaca was named the tournament's Most Outstanding Player. Schulz had 13 points, nine rebounds and four steals in the title game. In the 84-76 first-round win over Westfield State Friday night, he had 12 points and six rebounds. He sank ten of 13 field goals in the tournament.

Wallen joined Schulz on the all-tournament team from Ithaca. Wallen had 29 points (12-for-23 from the floor) and 13 rebounds. In the title game, he had 12 points and seven rebounds before fouling out with eight minutes left.

Defensively, Ithaca limited Salve Regina (1-1) guard Rafael Cardoso to 11 points on 3-for-11 shooting from the floor. Cardoso had scored 30 in an 89-78 first-round win over Eastern Connecticut Friday. Cardoso was joined by teammate Chris Collier on the all-tournament team from Salve. Collier had 16 points and 14 rebounds in the championship game loss. Sophomore guard **Gordon Shepard (WATERBURY)** of Eastern and Bryant James of Westfield rounded out the all-tournament team. **In the tournament, Shepard had 31 points, seven assists and three steals. He hit 11 of 16 field goals, including six of eight from three-point range.**

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ECSU salvages third-place finish

After missing the tournament championship game for only the fifth time in 22 years, Eastern sank 16 of 27 three-point field goal tries to down Westfield State 78-55 in the third-place game.

The Warriors never trailed in the game after junior guard **Tony White (HEMPSTEAD, NY)** and senior guard **Rich Vega (HARTFORD)** sank three-point field goals to make it 6-0 one minute into action. White set up Vega's "three" with a steal after hitting his initial field goal.

Vega scored 15 of his game-high 18 points to help the Warriors to a 40-16 halftime lead. ECSU sank eight of 15 three-pointers in the first half.

Shepard added 17 points and White, who had scored a career-high 19 points in an 89-78 first-round loss to Salve Regina University Friday, followed with 15. Shepard and White combined to hit 11 of 17 field goals. Senior center **Billy Rea (WINSTED)** grabbed a game-high 11 rebounds for the second straight game.

little east conference

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Friday November 16, 2001

ITHACA, SALVE ADVANCE TO SULINSKI FINAL
Bombers edge Westfield State, Seahawks knock off host Warriors

WILIMANTIC, Conn. -- Rafael Cordoso scored 19 of his game-high 30 points in the second half to lift the Salve Regina University men's basketball team to an 89-78 win over host Eastern Connecticut State University Friday night in the opening round of the Nancy K. Sulinski '76 Memorial Basketball Tournament at Francis E. Geissler Gymnasium.

The Seahawks will face Ithaca College in Saturday's 7:30 p.m. championship game. The Bombers spotted Westfield State College an 8-0 lead and later wiped out a 14-point deficit to post an 84-76 win. ECSU meets Westfield Saturday at 3 p.m. in the third-place game.

Eastern, which had appeared in 17 of the tournament's first 20 championship games, also watched a big lead disappear. The Warriors led by ten at halftime and by five with eight minutes left before the Seahawks roared back for the win in their first tournament appearance.

Cordoso, a junior guard, hit nine of 16 field goals in the game and six of ten three-pointers. He hit five of seven three-pointers in the second half. Junior guard Bryan Dlugolenski followed Cordoso with 20 points, sinking eight of 13 field goals. Eastern was limited to one field goal over the final four minutes of the game as Salve finished with a 14-2 scoring burst. Five different players contributed to Salve's 14-2 run over the final minutes, with Dlugolenski hitting a pair of buckets and also helping put Salve ahead when he stole the ball to set up a go-ahead three-point field by Michael Verderame that gave the Seahawks the lead for good 78-76 with 2:30 left.

Senior guard **Rich Vega (HARTFORD)** led Eastern with 21 points, junior guard **Tony White (HEMPSTEAD, NY)** adding a career-high 19 and sophomore guard **Gordon Shepard (WATERBURY)** and senior guard **Jason Leydon (MILFORD)** 14 each and **Billy Rea (WINSTED)** grabbing a game-high 11 rebounds. All five ECSU starters played at least 33 minutes.

Ithaca, which won the inaugural tournament title in 1980, won its fifth tournament game in seven tries by wiping out a 14-point lead seven minutes into the second half. The Bombers limited Westfield to just 29.4 per cent shooting in the second half. Ithaca outscored Westfield 12-4 to break from a 72-all tie with four minutes left. Jason Wallen hit two free throws to give Ithaca the lead for good 73-72 and after Westfield turned the ball over, Wallen grabbed an offensive rebound of a missed free throw to set up a basket by Dane Fischer to make it 75-72.

Wallen led a balanced Ithaca attack with 17 points, with four additional players scoring between ten and 12 points. Matthew Riggins of Ithaca had 12 points and 12 rebounds.

Leonard Miller of Westfield had a game-high 23 points, Bryan James adding 21 points and a team-high 11 rebounds.