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# Eagle Defense Clamps Down on Broncos in 56-37 Win

Eagles move to 2-1 in MAC play with 56-37 victory



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**YPSILANTI, Mich. (EMUEagles.com)** -- Eastern Michigan University's men's basketball team bounced back from a Mid-American Conference loss to overtake in-state opponent Western Michigan University, 56-37, inside the Convocation Center, Tuesday evening, Jan. 14. With the win, the Eagles are boosted to a 10-6 (2-1 MAC) record and a share for the lead of the MAC West Division, while the Broncos fall to 9-6 (2-1 MAC). The 37 points scored by the Broncos are the fewest allowed since the Green and White held Northern Illinois University to 25 points, Jan. 26, 2013.

The Eagles were led by [Darell Combs](#) (**South Holland, Ill.-Thornwood (Blinn)**), who had 14 points on 4-of-9 shooting from the field, and [Mike Talley](#) (**Detroit, Mich.-Melvindale ABT (Duquesne)**), whose 14 points came from going 3-of-5 from three-point range and hitting five free throws. Talley also led the team in assists with three and notched an additional three steals. Despite Talley's effort on defense, the leader in steals was [Daylen Harrison](#) (**Akron, Ohio-St. Vincent-St. Mary**), who had a career-high five steals in the contest.

As a team, the Eagles were 17-of-47 a 36.2 shooting percentage from the field. The squad additionally went 16-of-23 from the free throw line for a 69.6 percent clip. The team notched a season-high 18 steals, the most since the opening game against Concordia University, Nov. 12, when the team snatched the ball 14 times against the Cardinals. It was also the most since EMU posted 18 steals in a loss to Davidson back on Nov. 10, 2006. The Eagles also forced 26 turnovers which was the most since they forced 32 against Davidson in that same game. The Broncos

were held to 12-of-42 shooting, but pulled down 38 rebounds compared to 31 for the Eagles. WMU was led by David Brown, who contributed 18 points before being ejected for a flagrant foul in the final minutes of the game.

After a bout of spry Eagle defense as the Broncos made their first attempt to score, [Glenn Bryant \(Detroit, Mich.-Oak Hill Academy \(Arkansas\)\)](#) rejected a shot from Connor Tava. WMU quickly got the ball back and hit a triple to open up scoring for the matchup, but Combs answered back with a shot of his own from behind the arc to tie the contest up at three points apiece.

David Brown scored his second long shot of the game to put the Broncos up, 8-3. Bryant then made a play on the other end of the court, running through the open lane to get an assist from Talley and throwing down a dunk to bring the Green and White within three points of the Broncos. The Eagles took the lead shortly after Combs hit a free throw and a three-pointer. Talley nailed another triple from the top of the arc to establish more of a cushion as the count was brought to 12-8 after the uncontested nine-point run.

Talley found his favorite spot to drain a three-pointer once more, as he hit his second trey in-a-row. Fired up by the recent explosive scoring effort, Bryant nabbed the ball from Tucker Haymond and bounded down-court with Haymond in close pursuit. Haymond's effort seemed in vain, as Bryant elevated well above his defender to slam a dunk that sent shockwaves of excitement through the crowd and draw a foul, converting on the and-one.

The Green and White quickly found more opportunities to score, gaining a 22-10 advantage over WMU. The Broncos were held scoreless for six minutes, as the Eagles played a stingy defense rife with shot-forcing pressure, soaring blocks, and accurate readings on their opponent's plays.

Western managed to put together a four-point run as the Eagles struggled to find ways to score on their end of the court. Talley got the gears moving again with his third three-pointer of the evening to extend the advantage to a 27-14 count. But the Eagles were not offensively sparked until the final 40 seconds of the half, when [Mo Hughley \(Queens Village, N.Y.-Martin Van Buren \(CSU Bakersfield\)\)](#) hit a pair from behind the charity stripe and [Raven Lee \(Detroit, Mich.-Romulus\)](#) hit a triple in the final seconds to boost spirits heading into the locker room.

As the team left the court for halftime, it held a commanding 32-14 lead over the Broncos. Talley led all players with 11 points thanks in large part to going 3-of-4 from three-point range. Defensively, Harrison proved to be a stealthy pickpocket on the court as he came away with three steals. Bryant rejected two shots and had two steals of his own, contributing to the Eagles' four blocks and eight steals of the half.

Collectively, the Eagles were 10-of-23 shooting to boast a 43.5 percent clip. The Green and White was successful from beyond the arc, hitting 6-of-10 for an impressive 60.0 percent shooting accuracy rate, and only missed one free throw to notch 85.7 percent from the charity stripe.

The Broncos were held to just 4-of-20 shooting to record a mere 20.0 percent clip from the field. WMU also struggled from the free throw line, hitting just four extra shots. The team was led by Brown, who earned the majority of his points in the opening three minutes of play with back-to-back three-pointers. The Broncos did have slight success on the boards, as they out-rebounded the Eagles, 18-14.

The Eagles opened up the second half by notching a pair of steals, the second of which resulted in a high post jump shot from Bryant. Brown, who had been relatively dormant since the start of the first half, hit a sideline three for the Broncos. After a scramble under the Eagle basket in order to retrieve the seemingly saponaceous ball, [Karrington Ward \(Lockport, Ill.-Lockport Township \(Morain Valley CC\)\)](#) secured possession and rose up for a mid-range jumper to put the Eagles up, 36-17, in the first three minutes of the second half.

While the Eagles were unable to score for six minutes, WMU went on a 7-0 run before Combs sank a free throw, yet the Green and White had built up such a strong lead that even with the run the Broncos still trailed, 37-24. A three-pointer by Jared Klein brought WMU within 10 points of the Eagles, as it continued to chip away at the point deficit.

The Green and White went through another four minutes of scoreless play, but Harrison mustered a tip-in off a tussle under the glass. After Brown hit his fourth three-pointer, Combs quickly careened down-court and around oncoming defenders, dropping in a teardrop shot from the middle of the key over the windmilling arms of Whittington to put the Eagles up, 41-31, with seven minutes remaining in the contest.

Following some relatively silent scoring from a trio of free throws, [Da'Shonte Riley \(Detroit, Mich.-Detroit Country Day \(Syracuse\)\)](#) riled up the team by pushing off Whittington with a power dribble to swing under the rim for a dunk. Using the momentum from the dynamic play, Combs glided to the basket for a shot off the glass to pull the Eagles away from the Broncos once more with a 48-35 edge.

The next quintet of points was scored solely from free throws, and the Broncos were held scoreless as [Ali Farhat \(Dearborn, Mich.-Dearborn\)](#) nabbed the ball for a fastbreak layup to contribute the final pair of points for the Eagles. As the clock wound down, the Eagles wrapped up the evening with a 56-37 victory over Western Michigan.

The Eagles will hit the road for their next contest, as they will face Michigan MAC foe Central Michigan in a 7 p.m. matchup Saturday, Jan. 18.