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Eastern Michigan University

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EMU Hoops Ends Losing Skid to Kent State, 70-53

Eagles defeat the Golden Flashes for the first time since 1996-97, breaking a 17-game losing streak



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YPSILANTI, Mich. (EMUEagles.com) – The Eastern Michigan University men's basketball team broke a losing skid that lasted 17 games defeating Kent State University the first time since the 1996-97 season. The Eagles used a complete game on both sides of the floor to soar past the Golden Flashes, 70-53, Saturday afternoon, Feb. 8, at the Convocation Center.

EMU evens its conference mark at 5-5 with the victory while improving to 13-10 overall on the 2013-14 campaign. With the loss, Kent State falls to 12-11, including 3-7 in MAC play.

Guards **Darrell Combs (Chicago, Ill.-Thornwood)** and **Raven Lee (Detroit, Mich.-Romulus)** each recorded 15 points apiece to pace the Eagles in scoring. **Karrington Ward (Lockport, Ill.-Lockport Township)** also reached double figures with 10 points while grabbing five rebounds. Eastern shot 21-for-47 for the game at a 44.7 percent clip. The Green and White lived at the foul line in the second half, draining 20-27 from the stripe to add to its 69.7 percentage (23-33) for the entire 40 minutes. EMU's bench outscored the reserves of Kent State, 29-13, and the Eagles dominated the paint, 30-18.

Kent State shot 34.6 percent from the field, sinking 18-of-52 buckets. The visitors struggled from three-point land, making only four out of 26 tries. KSU was led in scoring by a pair of Golden Flashes, Darren Goodson and Derek Jackson, who each tallied 11. KSU only out-rebounded the Eagles by one, taking down 34 boards compared to 33.

After the Golden Flashes scored the opening basket of the game, EMU countered with a [Daylen Harrison](#) (Akron, Ohio-St. Vincent St. Mary) deuce and a three from Lee. Kent State responded with a bucket, but Lee and Harrison continued to provide the offensive spark for the Green and White. Lee drilled a jumper from the elbow, and Harrison provided a tip-in, putting the Eagles up, 9-4. Both teams were hot from the start as KSU converted three of its first four from the field. However, Eastern made five of its first eight shots to remain ahead by five, 11-6, with 15:27 left in the opening half.

Kent State cut the margin to one, but Combs kept the Eagles in front with seven- straight points. As the shot clock was winding down, he drilled a step back basket before hitting a three from the wing. Feeling it, the Chicago, Ill. native then took the ball straight to the hoops for the left-handed layup to increase the EMU advantage to eight. Lee added a layup to build the lead to double digits, and Coach [Rob Murphy](#)'s squad tightened up on defense, creating problems for the Golden Flashes' offense.

Eastern's 12-0 run ended as Devareaux Manley hit a jumper just inside the arc. The bucket broke a scoring drought that lasted nearly seven minutes. EMU answered with a trey from Ward, doubling up Kent State on the scoreboard, 28-14. The Golden Flashes added a three-ball of their own, but Combs drained one on the other side of the court to keep the difference at 14. Going into the locker room, the Green and White maintained the double digit advantage, 35-25.

EMU shot an impressive 56 percent from the floor in the first 20 minutes, sinking 14-of-25. The Eagles made half of its attempted threes and free throws, going 4-of-8 and 3-of-6, respectively. Combs tallied 12 first half points off the bench, and Lee followed with nine points. Eastern found success in the paint, recorded 18 points there while also scoring seven points off eight forced turnovers.

In the first half, the Golden Flashes were led by eight points from Manley and seven points from Jackson. KSU shot 10-of-22 from the field for a 45.5 percent clip, but struggled from beyond the arc, making only three of its 10 looks. At the halfway point of the contest, Kent State held a slight rebounding advantage, 14-11.

Coming out for the final 20 minutes, Kent State cut the lead in half with a pair of buckets. The visiting team added two free throws, but Harrison ended the 7-0 run by converting two from the charity stripe. After making a stop defense, [Mike Talley](#) (Detroit, Mich.-Melvindale ABT) drove right down the lane for a finger roll. EMU's starting points guard attacked the KSU defense again for a bucket inside, bringing the lead back to nine. [Glenn Bryant](#) (Detroit, Mich.-Oak Hill Academy) then brought the house down with a sequence of plays. The senior blocked a three before running out in transition. Recovering the blocked shot, Ward found the streaking Bryant down the floor, and the Detroit, Mich. native threw down the dunk, forcing Kent State to take a timeout as the Eagles led, 43-32, with 15:49 remaining in the game. Two possessions later, Bryant blocked another three before taking the ball to the bucket and drawing a foul. He knocked down both from the line to increase the EMU run to 10-straight points.

The Eagles' 2-3 zone continued to cause problems for Kent State, and Eastern built the advantage up to 20. The Green and White' s monstrous run grew to 20-3 before the Golden Flashes made their first bucket in a nine-minute span. Back-to-back baskets by KSU didn't sit well with Coach Murphy, who asked for timeout with 8:19 left and a 16-point cushion, 55-39.

The Golden Flashes got back in the game with a 14-1 run in four minutes, bringing the margin to seven. However, that would be the closes they would get as EMU countered with seven straight to lead by 14, 63-49, with under three minutes to go. The Eagles would end the losing skid against Kent State with the final margin of victory, 70-53.

EMU hits the road for its next MAC matchup, venturing to Muncie, Ind. to battle the Cardinals of Ball State University, Feb. 12. Tip from John E. Worthen Arena is scheduled for 7 p.m.