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Men's Hoops Rockets Past Toledo, 65-44, on Hall of Fame Day

Ward and Talley score 13 points each as EMU takes down the MAC West leaders



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YPSILANTI, Mich. (EMUEagles.com) — The Eastern Michigan University men's basketball team secured a victory over Mid-American Conference foe and MAC West leader the University of Toledo, 65-44, diffusing the Rockets on Hall of Fame Day, Feb. 15. With the win, the Eagles improve to 15-10 overall (7-5 MAC), while the Rockets fall to 21-4 (9-3 MAC).

The Eastern Michigan University E-Club Alumni Chapter, a group of former EMU varsity athletic letterwinners, welcomed seven new members into the E-Club Athletic Hall of Fame on Saturday. The Class of 2013 was honored at the Hall of Fame ceremony in the EMU Student Center on campus before being introduced at halftime of the game. The Class of 2013 includes: **Dennis Betts (men's swimming)**, **Earl Boykins (men's basketball)**, **JoyAnn Clarke (women's track and field)**, **Wondella Devers (women's basketball/track)**, **Derrick Dial (men's basketball)**, **Eugene Smith (administrator)** and **Donald Stewart (men's basketball and football)**.

The Eagles were led by the duo of [Mike Talley \(Detroit, Mich.-Melvindale ABT \(Duquesne\)\)](#) and [Karrington Ward \(Lockport, Ill.-Lockport Township \(Moraine CC\)\)](#), who poured in 13 points each in the win. Ward also came away with eight rebounds, along with [Da'Shonte Riley \(Detroit, Mich.-Detroit Country Day \(Syracuse\)\)](#), who tied his career-high in blocks with seven rejections. The leader on the boards was [Daylen Harrison \(Akron, Ohio-St. Vincent-St. Mary \(Wyoming\)\)](#), with a game-high nine rebounds.

As a team, the Eagles shot 23-of-53 for a 46.0 percent clip, which is the most efficient offensive output since the team took down Rochester College, Jan. 4, backed by a 59.6 percent success rate. The Green and White also boasted a 75.0 shooting percentage from the charity stripe, as the team hit 15-of-20 free throws. Defensively, the Eagles came away with eight steals and a staggering nine blocks, while forcing an additional six turnovers.

The Rockets were held to just 14-of-54 shooting for 25.9 percent, led by the pair of Julius Brown and Jonathan Williams, who also paced their team with 13 points apiece. Toledo was also heavily out-rebounded, as the Eagles picked up their game on the glass in the second half to finish with a 43-30 edge in boards. The 44 points were a team-low for the Rockets, nearly half of their season average of points per game.

The Green and White surrendered the first pair of points after Nathan Boothe found J.D. Weatherspoon open in the low post, but quickly retaliated and took the lead after [Raven Lee](#) (**Detroit, Mich.-Romulus**) hit a triple from the left side of the arc. A steal from Lee on the next Rocket possession allowed the redshirt-freshman to drive the length of the court for a fastbreak layup, giving the Eagles a 5-2 advantage.

While the Eagles' stingy defense prevented the Toledo wingmen from making a move to the hoop, the Rockets' perimeter game stepped up as Brown hit a three-pointer to keep the squad on pace with the steady scoring offense of the Green and White.

Holding a 10-7 lead coming out of the first timeout, Riley swatted a shot out of the hands of Boothe and into Lee's possession. The squad was able to take care of the ball on the other end, as Talley nailed a jumper with only a handful of seconds left on the expiring shot clock. The Rockets iced EMU's offense while expanding their own point count, and took the lead after Williams sank a shot from beyond the arc, flopping the score to 14-12 in favor of Toledo.

The matchup remained stagnant on both sides until eight minutes remained in the half, when Lee made a move to the basket to attempt a layup which was salvaged by [Glenn Bryant](#) (**Detroit, Mich.-Oak Hill Academy (Arkansas)**) and converted into a dunk as the Eagles still trailed, 16-14. The squad was able to pull ahead after Harrison hit back-to-back buckets to bring the Eagles up 18-16.

Toledo continued to put up numerous shots, but the aggressive defensive rebounding by the Eagles allowed the Green and White to control the pace of the game. As Ward fended off a pair of Rocket defenders in the low post for a pair of points, Toledo Head Coach Tod Kowalczyk was forced to call a timeout in an effort to rally his players.

A pair of free throws allowed the Rockets to catch up to the Eagles at 20 apiece, but Talley and Ward hit consecutive triples to swing the score to 26-20 in a matter of seconds. A fastbreak layup from Jonathan Williams would give the Rockets' the final say in the half, as the Eagles left the court for the half with a 26-22 edge over Toledo.

The Eagles shot 11-of-25 in the first 20 minutes for a 44.0 success rate, led by Ward with six points and six rebounds. Harrison also chipped in six points for the Green and White. Defensively, Riley led the way in blocks, as the center rejected three shot in the first half. The Rockets were paced by Williams, who had a game-high seven points. Toledo was held to just seven made shots and a 24.1 percent clip, but held the slight edge on the boards, out-rebounding the Eagles 20-18.

The second half got off to a slow start, as neither team was able to score for nearly three minutes until Justin Drummond hit a pair of free throws to bring Toledo within two points. Two shots from the charity stripe by Harrison extended the lead to four, but the Eagles did not see action again until Lee came away with a steal and finished with a layup at 15:25.

The Eagles earned their largest lead thus far, 32-24, after Riley fed Ward under the bucket for a one-handed dunk. After Harrison craftily forced the ball off a Rocket under the Eagle basket, [Darell Combs \(Chicago, Ill.-Thornwood \(Blinn\)\)](#) found Ward on the left sideline for a smooth triple off an inbound pass. The Green and White's 9-0 run was halted after Matt Smith hit a three-pointer for Toledo, but his effort was answered back with a jumper from [J.R. Sims \(Fort Wayne, Ind.-Snider\)](#) to boost the Eagles to 37-27.

Gaining some confidence from the solid point advantage over the Rockets, the Green and White became more aggressive inside the paint. A drive from Talley was picked up again by Bryant for another put-back dunk. The duo drew fouls on their next moves on the inside to sink a handful of free throws to build the advantage up to 42-31 with just over nine minutes remaining in the contest.

Brown hit consecutive three-pointers to bring the Rockets within seven points at the 7:20 mark, but scoring on both sides slowed, save for a few free throws by the Eagles to build the margin back up to 10 points, 47-40. Going into the final five minutes in which the Eagles have struggled as of late, Williams hit a three to get the Rockets back on pace. In order to prevent the game from slipping away, Sims made a dynamic move from the right side of the arc for an up and under layup in the left post. A double-digit lead was reclaimed following a dunk by Bryant, which forced Toledo to take another pause in the action with four minutes to play.

The Eagles hit an offensive groove, as they smoothly sailed to a 21-point advantage when Talley muscled through the Toledo defense for two layups and Riley gingerly placed the ball through the rim on an uncontested hook-shot and picked up his aggression for a putback dunk to score the final points for the Green and White. The team ended the afternoon matchup with a 65-44 advantage over the MAC West-leading Rockets.

EMU will take its winning ways on the road for a pair of MAC West contests, heading to DeKalb, Ill., Feb. 20, to battle the Northern Illinois University Huskies before taking on the Western Michigan University Broncos, Feb. 23, in Kalamazoo, Mich. The Eagles and Huskies will tip off at 7 p.m. ET. Meanwhile, the Sunday matinee between the two in-state rivals will begin at 2 p.m.