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Northern Illinois Outlasts EMU in Double Overtime Slug Fest

The Green and White fell, 61-59, at the NIU Convocation Center



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DeKALB, Ill. (EMUEagles.com) – It took two overtime periods for the Eastern Michigan University men's basketball team to complete its contest with Northern Illinois University Thursday, Feb. 20, at the NIU Convocation Center. The Eagles (15-11, 7-6 MAC) ended up on the short end of a 61-59 decision as the Huskies (12-13, 6-7 MAC) halted EMU's three-game winning streak. It was the first game since March 11, 2010 that Eastern played in a double overtime game. Eastern ended up on the losing end of that contest as well, 97-89, versus the University of Akron.

[Mike Talley](#) (Detroit, Mich.-Melvindale ABT (Duquesne)) led Eastern in the scoring department with 17, while [Karrington Ward](#) (Lockport, Ill.-Lockport Township (Moraine Valley C.C.)) poured in 13 and [Raven Lee](#) (Detroit, Mich.-Romulus) added 10. [Da'Shonte Riley](#) (Detroit, Mich.-Country Day (Syracuse)) was again the defensive catalyst for the Eagles, blocking four shots, while pulling down a team-high 13 rebounds and ripping away two steals. As a team, Eastern shot just 27 percent (17-of-63) on the night, while holding Northern Illinois to just a 29 percent (18-of-62) from the floor.

Jordan Threloff led the Huskies with a game-high 27 points and 18 rebounds. The 6-foot-9 forward pulled down nine offensive rebounds. Aaric Armstead added a double-double of his own, knocking down 4-of-11 shots, good for 13 points, while caroming 10 rebounds. The Huskies out-rebounded EMU 63-42.

The first half was a sloppily played offensive 20 minutes. Both teams scored just 16 points. The Eagles fell behind by four to start the contest, but tied things up quickly at four. Ward gave EMU its first lead of the game with 13:27 to go, taking a two point advantage. As the half went on, both teams traded mainly free throws as each squad saw field goal deficits of nine minutes or more. After trailing by as many as three, 9-6, with just over six minutes to go, EMU was able to spark a miniature run, knotting things up at 10 apiece.

The sloppy play continued as each team traded buckets down the stretch, but a jumper from Lee made it look as though the Green and White would head into the locker room with an advantage, Aaric Armstead followed up a Travon Baker missed triple with a buzzer beating put-back to tie the game at 16 apiece.

The offensively challenged first half saw three Eagle score with Lee heading the charge, posting seven. Talley added five, while Ward notched four. Riley recorded three of his four blocks in the opening 20 minutes, while Ward added a rejection, as well as [Olalekan Ajayi](#) (**Winston-Salem, N.C.-Quality Education Academy (Collin College)**).

The second half brought a lot more offensive excitement as NIU scored the first bucket of the last frame to take a lead. Eastern however responded with a 4-0 run to take its first lead of the half, 20-18. After Northern knotted the game at 20, EMU went on a 13-4 run, taking their largest lead of the game, 24-33, with 11:50 remaining.

Eastern maintained the lead until a 6-0 run from the Huskies brought along the eighth tie of the game, 36-36, with 6:42 on the clock. EMU managed to regain a three point lead but saw it vanish just as quickly as it arrived. The Green and White traded baskets until they took a three-point, 44-41, lead with just 2:33 on the clock. The Huskies went on a four-point run to take a one-point lead with just 1:22 remaining.

Looking at a 45-44 deficit, Talley stepped to the free throw line after being fouled by Aaron Armstead with 26 seconds remaining. The redshirt-junior knocked down both of his attempts from the charity stripe to put EMU back on top, 46-45. On the next trip, Threloff grabbed an offensive board on a missed jumper from Baker and put back an easy layup to take another lead. In the ensuing EMU possession, Riley was fouled by Darrell Bowie and he knocked down 1-of-2 sending the game into overtime with a 47-47 score.

The overtime period began with the Green and White looking at a quick four point deficit, 53-49, but Ward took it upon himself to give the Eagles another lead, scoring five straight points in just 30 seconds of play. With a 54-53 advantage, Ajayi fouled Bowie, who split a pair at the charity stripe to tie it up. Talley was fouled on the next possession and knocked down 1-of-2, giving Eastern a 55-54 lead with just 22 seconds on the clock. Ajayi committed another foul on the next NIU possession, putting Aaric Armstead at the line. The freshman missed the first, leaving the Eagles up one with the Huskies having just one more shot at tying it up, but Armstead came through knocking down the free one and sending the game into a second overtime.

Eastern began the final period by jetting out on a 4-0 run to go up 59-55 with 3:14 left in the contest. It looked as though the Eagles had locked up the win, however a missed jumper with 59 seconds to go, gave NIU a chance come within one or take the lead. Aaric Armstead laid one in off of a feed from Daveon Balls, bringing EMU within one. On the next possession, [Daylen Harrison](#) (**Akron, Ohio-St. Vincent-St. Mary (Wyoming)**) came up empty on a jumper and Harrison fouled Bowie on the other end of the floor. Bowie hit the first free through but missed the second, after a missed put back attempt, Threloff came in off of the second miss with a put back layup which fell through the net with just under four seconds on the clock, giving NIU the victory.

With the loss to Northern Illinois in the rear view mirror, Eastern Michigan continues its two game road swing with a trip to Kalamazoo, Mich. The Eagles will square off with the conference leading Broncos of Western Michigan University in a Sunday matinee at University Arena. Tipoff is scheduled for 2 p.m.

