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Eastern Michigan University

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# Combs Lights Up University Arena in 75-67 Setback to WMU

Darell Combs scored 21 points in the loss at Western Michigan



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**KALAMAZOO, Mich. (EMUEagles.com)** – It was a foul-plagued contest as the Eastern Michigan University men's basketball team dropped a 75-67 decision on the road at University Arena to Western Michigan University Sunday, Feb. 23, which saw 55 fouls called. The Eagles (15-12, 7-7 MAC) led the Broncos (18-8, 11-3 MAC) by three in the second half, but were unable to hold on for a win.

[Darell Combs](#) (Chicago, Ill.-**Thornwood (Blinn)**) had an outstanding game for EMU posting a team-high 21 points on 8-of-16 shooting. The junior college transfer knocked down three triples and dished out a pair of assists. [Glenn Bryant](#) (Detroit, Mich.-**Oak Hill Academy (Arkansas)**) racked up 12 points on 6-of-11 shooting and [Mike Talley](#) (Detroit, Mich.-**Melvindale ABT (Duquesne)**) accumulated 10 points, with three assists in the loss. As a team, Eastern shot 39.7 percent (25-of-63), while knocking down 40.9 percent (9-of-22) from the long line. The Eagles struggled at the charity stripe, hitting just eight of their 18 attempts, good for just a 44.4 percent free throw mark.

For the Broncos, Shayne Whittington led the way scoring 22 points and caroming a game-high 11 rebounds. The Mid-American Conference's leading point-scorer, David Brown, added 20 points for Western, while Austin Richie contributed 10 of his own. Brown did most of his work from the charity stripe knocking down 11 free attempts. WMU shot 40.9 percent from the floor, which was the best shooting percentage EMU had allowed since Miami University shot 43.1 percent back on Feb. 1 in Oxford, Ohio.

The first 20 minutes of the game was played very sloppily on the offensive end of the floor. [Raven Lee \(Detroit, Mich.-Romulus\)](#) lifted the lid on the scoring with a three-ball on Eastern's first offensive possession before Brown knocked down a pair of free throws in the Broncos' next possession. The Green and White then scored five straight to give EMU a six-point, 8-2, lead, which proved to be EMU's largest of the game. However, Eastern saw that lead diminish quickly as Western scored six in a row to knot things up at eight points apiece.

Both squads seemed content with trading points until the 11:11 mark when Richie cashed in free throws after being fouled on an attempted three-point shot, beginning an 8-0 run that gave Western a 19-13 lead with 10:03 left in the opening frame. The Eagles saw themselves looking at a four to six point deficit through the next six minutes before Western extended its lead to eight, 27-19, when Brown knocked down a triple from the wing. The Eagles cut back into the lead, knocking it down to as low as six, but a three-pointer from Kellen McCormick with eight seconds on the clock put Western up 10. However, with just five seconds on the clock, Combs grabbed the inbounds pass and sprinted the distance of the floor, drawing a foul and cashing in on a pair of free throws to make it an eight point deficit heading into the locker room.

Eastern shot just 29.6 percent from the floor in the first half, going just 8-of-27 from the field. Western was not much better, knocking down just eight of their 23 shot attempts. It was the free throw attempts that made the difference in the first half. WMU shot 19 free throws, knocking down 15 of them to hold on to a 34-26 lead after the first 20 minutes of play. Brown notched 12 of the Broncos' 34 first half points, while Eastern did not have anyone with more than six points in that span.

The second half started off strong offensively as each team shot above 80 percent in the first five minutes of play, but EMU saw its hole built to 12 when Richie knocked down a three-ball to make it 46-34. Talley responded with a three of his own, but Whittington hit on a jumper inside the paint to keep a double-digit lead, 48-37, with 15:16 to go.

Combs drove the lane and finished a layup on EMU's next possession which sparked a 15-4 run in favor of the Eagles. During that run, Combs hit on three triple tries, and scored 13 of the points, which led to the first tie game since the first half, 52-52. The Eagles allowed Western to regain a four point lead but then went on a 7-0 run to take a three-point, 59-56, lead with 8:04 on the clock.

The Broncos did not go away to and came back to score six of their own, taking back its lead. Eastern managed to tie the game when Talley converted a layup with 5:57 on the clock. With the scored tied at 62, the Eagles missed back-to-back jumpers in the same possession before Whittington stuck back a missed layup giving the Broncos another lead. In Eastern's next trip down, Talley tossed an errant pass which saw Richie running the floor for a wide open layup. As he attempted to go up for a layup, Combs wrapped the Bronco guard up with two hands, being called for an intentional foul, giving WMU two free throws and the ball back. Richie hit one-of-two, putting them up three, but Eastern saw the Broncos extend their lead out to as many as seven, before having to foul for any attempt to win. Western knocked down the majority of its free ones, winding up on the winning side of the eventual 75-67 final tally.

Eastern is off until Wednesday, Feb. 26, when it returns to the Convocation Center for another MAC West battle. The Eagles will welcome Central Michigan University to Ypsilanti for a 7 p.m. rematch between the two institutions. The Green and White was on the good side of a 72-59 decision at McGuirk Arena the last time CMU and EMU met, Jan. 18.