

ECC BASKETBALL

Slam Dunk Victory

Panthers show depth in 47-point win

BY MARISSA VANWINGEN | mvanwingen@iafalls.com

Ellsworth Community College's length, depth and ability to score were on full display on Tuesday night.

Against Minnesota West Community and Technical College, the 14th highest scoring team in the nation had 13 players reach the scoring column as they blew out the visiting Bluejays (0-2) 114-67 in front of a home crowd packed inside Dittmer Gymnasium.

"You celebrate every win, regardless of who you play, regardless of the opponent, regardless of what level they are. You celebrate every win because winning is hard," Panther head coach Bryan Bender said. "We took care of business and were able to get some guys in towards the end of the game and rest some of our main guys, but at the end of the day, it's going to be a team effort from start to finish every single day."

One of the 11th ranked team's blemishes also showed in the first half. While ECC (4-0) scored 56 points, they gave up 41. Minnesota West built a 20-16 advantage before a three ball by Shawn Fulcher and a jumper by Diondre Taylor knotted the contest at 25-25. A bucket from Rich Ashu gave the Panthers a lead that they never relinquished again. The two were knotted again at 30-30 before ECC went on a 20-9 run to pull away. Eight different players scored in the opening 20 minutes as ECC broke free with a clear path to the basket. They went into the locker room ahead 56-41.

Defensively, the Panthers did much better in the second half. They limited the visitors to just 26 points and forced 13 turnovers. The hosts went on multiple runs to build the lead, including a 30-10 to go up by 37 (95-58). That run included four steals and fast break buckets by ECC.

Halfway through the second half, Bender was able to play everybody that was suited for the contest and give them extended minutes. Once again, the bench had 66 points in the contest.

Five different players were in double-digits, led by Fulcher's 21 off the pine. Dior Davis was seven of eight from the charity stripe and four of seven from the field for 15 points. Arlandus Keyes (12), Saliou Seye (11) and Ezekiel Thompkins (11) were all in double digits. ■

NJCAA Basketball

Tuesday at Iowa Falls

MW: 41 | 26 - 67

ECC: 56 | 58 - 114

ECC Scoring: Shawn Fulcher 9

2-3 21; Dior Davis 4 7-8 15;

Arlandus Keyes 5 2-2 12; Saliou

Seye 5 1-3 11; Zeke Thompkins 5 1-1 11; Tarik Islamovic 2 4-6 8; Bruce Kanno 2 3-3 7; Guido Klompenmaker 2 2-2 7; Clayton Ubben 3 0-0 6; Diondre Taylor 2 2-2 6; Jordan Glenn 1 2-2 4; Rich Ashu 2 0-0 4; Sharon Bason 1 0-0 2.

BRYAN BENDER
ECC Men's Basketball head coach

“You celebrate every win, regardless of who you play, regardless of the opponent, regardless of what level they are. You celebrate every win because winning is hard.”



Ellsworth Community College's Saliou Seye slammed home multiple dunks during the Panthers home win over Minnesota West Community and Technical College. Seye was one of five players in double figures.

PHOTOS BY MARISSA VANWINGEN / TIMES CITIZEN



The Panther mens basketball team is one of the highest scoring offenses in the country, but it was their defense in the second half that really stepped up. Zeke Thompkins and Dior Davis scrapped for a ball that turned into transition points in the 114-67 win over the Bluejays.

IF-A FOOTBALL

Seven earn recognition in Class 2A, District 7

Five first teamers for 2-7 Cadets

BY JUSTIN ITES | ites@iafalls.com

Individual honors are typically harder to earn during seasons that feature less team success.

Despite a 2-7 record, the Iowa Falls-Alden gridders had multiple individuals earn postseason recognition.

Coaches in Class 2A District 7 recently announced the all-district squad, and seven Cadets were on the list.

Earning first team status was ofensive players Grant Nielsen (OL), Kacen Boyer (utility), Jaden Damiano (return specialist) and Andrew Bicknese (wide receiver).

The first-team all defensive squad featured defensive lineman Kaden Steffen.

Rounding out the honors were a pair of honorable mention selections - Carter DeBates and Quinton Jaeger.

A hallmark of the 2021 squad, the ground game had trouble getting on track this fall. Boyer and Damiano combined to rush for 1,747 yards and 20 rushing scores behind a strong ofensive line.

Due to graduations, that positional unit underwent a bit of an overhaul

this season. Nielsen and Jacob Schipper were the only returning starters from that group, and the inexperience showed on the field. The dynamic talents of Boyer and Damiano rushed for 1,015 yards and 11 scores this season.

Boyer missed one game during the non-district portion of the schedule, a road loss at South Hardin. He began to pile up numbers at the halfway point of the season, finishing with 581 yards and eight scores. Damiano tallied 434 yards and three touchdowns, and added 330 return yards on kick returns.

A senior lineman, Nielsen had a productive season on both sides of the ball. While helping guide the inexperienced lineman, he was fourth on the team with 32.5 tackles.

Bicknese turned in a strong season from his receiver position, and was the team's top target in the passing game. He finished with 26 catches for 369 yards and a pair of touchdowns.

On the defensive side of the ball, Steffen made a big impact following his return from major knee surgery in the offseason. After missing the opening week loss versus Clear Lake, the physically strong senior contributed in many ways to the defense, and finished with 33 tackles.



JUSTIN ITES / TIMES CITIZEN

Iowa Falls-Alden senior receiver Andrew Bicknese was one of seven Cadets to earn all-district honors voted on by the district coaches.

2022 Iowa Falls-Alden Football Stat Leaders

Passing: Ethan Bartlett 51-121 534 yards 2 TDs 11 INTs; Jaden Damiano 3-5 118 yds TD; Matthew Harms 0-3 0 yds.

Rushing: Kacen Boyer 121-581 yds 8 TDs; Damiano 95-434 yds 3 TDs; Quinton Jaeger 59-288 yds; Aaron Halverson 6-11 yds; Nick Regan 3-8 yds.

Receiving: Andrew Bicknese 26-369 yds 2 TDs; Boyer 13-116 yds TD; Damiano 7-35 yds; Nathan Schmitz 5-95 yds; Carter Weaver 1-24 yds; Regan 1-13.

Tackles: Carter DeBates 63; Damiano 37.5; Kaden Steffen 33; Grant Nielsen 32.5; Jaeger 31; Andon Barrick 27; Bicknese 19; Boyer 17.5; Bartlett 15.5; Halverson 13.

Sacks: Steffen 2; Jacob Schipper 2; Halverson 1; Weaver 1.

Fumble Recoveries: Barrick 2; Jaeger 1; DeBates 1; Weaver 1; Logan Silver 1.

Interceptions: Boyer 2; Jaeger 1 1 TD; Barrick 1; Damiano 1; Bicknese 1; DeBates 1.

Kick Returns: Damiano 20-330 yds; Boyer 14-179 yds.

Punt Returns: Boyer 6-58 yds; Damiano 3-43 yds.

Kicking: Damiano 13-13 PATs, 1-1 FG.
Punting: Damiano 33-934 yds (28.3 Avg).