

1-11-1952

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College Heights Herald

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College Heights Herald, "UA12/2/1/2 Eastern Trip See Toppers Losing Three" (1952). *WKU Archives Records*. Paper 482. http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc_ua_records/482

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Eastern Trip See Toppers Losing Three

Traveling out to the East coast on December 27, with a record of eight wins to their credit the unbeaten Hilltoppers had high hopes of putting on a good show for the easterners in the three scheduled games at Buffalo, Philadelphia, and New York City. All of the teams they were to play were also unbeaten during this season.

Western went into the first game against St. Bonaventure with an average of 79.1 points per game, but they couldn't seem to get started in the Memorial auditorium at Buffalo and the Bonnies moved out in front in the first half by 19 points at one stage, 41-22. The half ended with a little hotter Western five on the floor as they dropped in five straight points before the end of the period to put the score at 42-57.

The 'Toppers staged a comeback in the second half, led by Tom Marshall, who was on the floor for the first time since he sprained his ankle in the second game of the year against Evansville, and Art Spoelstra who tallied 21 points for the night. Western gradually cut the lead until at one time with five minutes remaining in the game they were behind by only seven points 63-56.

The Bonnies had to waive eight free-throws in the last minutes of the game to keep the ball out of Topper hands. Final Western 60 – St. Bonaventure 73.

On the night of January 1, in the St. Joseph's Memorial Field House the 'Toppers came up against another undefeated cage team in LaSalle college. The final score was 67-58.

LaSalle staged two scoring sprees in the game that helped them to put the game on ice. Led by freshman, Tom Gola, LaSalle scored 13 straight points in the second quarter to run the score to 36-23 at halftime. Then in the fourth quarter it was Western's turn as they rallied to within six points of the home team 58-52 with but a few minutes remaining. The Topper opponents came back with six points in a row, however, to sew up the victory.

In the third nightmare for the squad of Kentuckians powerful Seton Hall, also undefeated as they trotted on the floor, took the 'Toppers in the second game of a double-header in Madison Square Garden 77-65 before a crowd of 9,871 onlookers.

After being behind 42-29 at the half, and 59-44 at the three-quarter mark the Western team once again put on that second half drive that their opponents have seen all year. But, once again it was stopped short as Art Spoelstra and Dick White both fouled out with less than five minutes to play. The 'Toppers trailed at one time in the final period 62-56; then Spoelstra and White left the game and Walter Dukes the 6-11 center from Seton Hall went to work to gradually increase the victory margin to its final 77-65. Dukes dumped in eight baskets and ten freethrows for a total of 26 points as high man for the night.