

# Brooks in thick of things with 19-7 WestConn

The 19-7 Western Connecticut State University men's basketball team rolled out nine wins over its last 12 games and, once again, sophomore sensation and former Bristol Central standout DaQuan Brooks was in the thick of things.

Two weeks ago, Brooks was named ECAC New England Player of the Week in what was a career week for the second year player.

Even though WestConn went 0-2 during the stretch, Brooks put up some monster numbers against Rhode Island and Keene State of New Hampshire.

Against Rhode Island on Feb. 9, Brooks went for 24 points off 9-for-22 shoot-

ing and also compiled two assists and four steals in 31 minutes of action. He went a perfect 5-of-5 from the free throw line. Rhode Island went on to win 96-70 in what turned out to be the Colonials largest loss of the campaign.

And on Feb. 13, he had his best game with a career-high 40 points off 13-of-26 shooting – including three three-pointers – in a close 100-95 loss to Keene State.

In 36 action packed minutes, Brooks nailed all 11 free throws he took while also amassing five rebounds, four assists and four steals against Keene.

For the week, the elusive Brooks averaged 33.5 points, 3.0 rebounds, 3.0

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assists and 4.0 steals-per-game in 33.5 minutes-per-game.

Brooks drilled 22-of-48 field goals (45.8-percent) and canned all 16 of his free throws during that stretch run.

On the year, Brooks has started 25 of 26 games and averages 19.6 points, 3.0 rebounds, 4.1 assists and 1.5 steals a game. Brooks averages a shade less than 32 minutes-per-game while hitting 81.1-percent of his free throws (107-of-132).

He leads the team in total points, assists, steals,

field goals made and attempted, free throws made and attempted, three-pointers made and attempted, minutes played and points.

Former Bristol Eastern star Cody Bayne is also having a solid freshman campaign and has played in 22 of the 26 contests this past season.

In 15.5 minutes-per-game, Bayne shoots 48.3-percent from the field (72-for-149) and averages 8.7 points and 2.7 rebounds.

Bayne has taken 56 three-pointers and made 19 (34-percent) while canning 28-of-37 free throws (75.7-percent) on the year.

He's fourth on the team in scoring while also fourth

on the squad in blocked shots with eight.

**NOTES:** This past Saturday, Western played Rhode Island College in the championship game of the Little East Conference.

WestConn led late in the contest but a three-pointer by Antone Gray with 1:06 left proved to be the game-winner as Rhode Island – who beat the Colonials by double-figures twice this past season – hung on to win 81-80.

But Western had one last chance to steal the victory as a free throw by Gary Robinson made it 81-80 with 14 seconds remaining.

Robinson missed the second free throw by an offensive rebound by Will

Jarrett gave the Colonials one final chance.

Brooks made a pass to Robinson under the hoop with three seconds left but his jumper didn't fall, as the ball rolled off the rim and Rhode Island just narrowly escaped.

With the victory, Rhode Island moves on to play in the Men's NCAA Division III Tournament.

Brooks scored 16 points in the game and had three assists and two steals while Bayne came off the bench and scored two points in eight minutes of action.

*Comments? Email mle-tendre@BristolObserver.com*

# Bristol's Blier, Harris big boost to Mitchell College

By MICHAEL LETENDRE  
STAFF WRITER

Mitchell College has a couple former Bristol Eastern grads as both Tyler Blier and Destiney Harris are getting major minutes on the hardwood for the Mariners.

Harris was a steady player for coach Tony Floyd at Eastern for three seasons and even played some point guard for the Lancers.

But for the Mariners, Harris is a gritty forward and has carved out a nice niche for herself as a front-court player.

Harris is the second leading scorer on the team and posts averages of 12.8 points and a team-leading 8.4 rebounds-per-game in 26.6 minutes-per-game.

Harris shoots the ball at 46.3-percent from the field (126-272) while averaging just under two steals per game (1.9 per).

She scored a season-high 24 points twice this year while leading the Mariners in rebounds 16 times with two games of 18 rebounds.

Her best game of the season came back on Feb. 6

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against Newbury College at Brookline, Massachusetts when she scored 24 points and grabbed 18 rebounds in 35 minutes of work in a tough 65-54 loss.

Harris, a sophomore, was named NECC Rookie of the week several times last season and averaged 12.6 points and 9.7 rebounds in 25 games in 2008-09.

This year, the Mariners are 13-12 on the season.

Blier is another Bristol

Eastern standout that has been a very productive member of the Mitchell Men's basketball program.

Blier was a tough-nosed forward/center for coach Mike Giovinazzo at Bristol Eastern. He quietly went about his work for the Lancers, banging down in the lane and usually had to guard the other team's biggest players.

Now, he's continued his workman like fashion for Mitchell and, again, is making things difficult for opponents inside.

Even though Mitchell is

4-19 this season, Blier is having a career year for the Mariners.

Playing in every game this season, the 6-foot-2 junior has started 20 contests and averages 5.6 points and 4.1 rebounds a game.

He shoots 53.1-percent from the field (51-for-96) and averages nearly 20 minutes-per-game for the Mariners.

Blier's 94 rebounds on the season is the third highest total on the squad while he's second on the team in total blocked shots.

He scored a team-high

17 points in an 82-63 victory over Eastern Nazarene back on Dec. 4 and also collected eight rebounds in 23 minutes of work.

For the season, Blier led the team in rebounding three different times including nine boards two Tuesdays ago in a 69-61 loss to Daniel Webster.

Blier has started 55 games for Mariners over his three seasons and played in a total of 71 contests for the Division III squad.

He's a human development major at Mitchell.



JOHN GORALSKI

## BC gymnasts in action

Several Bristol Central gymnasts have been traveling with the Southington High School team, competing as individuals. On Feb. 17, the Rams competed against Newington in a home meet with Southington. Kaley Beauchamp, above, scored 7.0 on the uneven bars. At right, Heather Rogan scored 7.4 on the floor. Central's Beauchamp and Jessica Blauvelt will be competing in the state open in New Milford on Saturday.

