



## Norse men continue to gel into cohesive unit



Quincy's Courtney Belger (32) battles Dustin Maguire for a loose ball during NKU's 71-52 win Saturday afternoon. Maguire led NKU with 14 points. On the right, NKU's Scott Bibbins drives past defender Kenneth Maye for a basket in the first half of the game.

## NKU jumps out to 23-6 lead, coasts to 71-52 victory over Quincy

HIGHLAND HEIGHTS, Ky. - Dave Bezold likes what he is seeing from his Northern Kentucky University Norse at the moment, and the fifth-year head coach is especially pleased with his team's performance at home.

"Our goal is always to protect our home court, especially in the conference," Bezold said after NKU rolled to a 71-52 win against Quincy in The Bank of Kentucky Center on Saturday. "We were very fortunate this week to come out in the first half and establish a comfortable lead against two teams that were playing well."



Dave Bezold

"What I see coming is a very good, cohesive unit right now. We're really building into a very good team. The players have a lot of confidence in each other and an understanding right now of what their teammates do well."

Dustin Maguire scored 14 points and grabbed six rebounds to lead NKU. Maguire knocked down four

shots from 3-point range.

Leslie Malone added 12 points, nine rebounds and two blocked shots, while teammate DeAaron Williams finished

with 11 points and seven rebounds. NKU (14-4 overall, 7-2 Great Lakes Valley Conference) built a 41-22 halftime lead by shooting 51.6 percent from the field.

A'Daeron Duncan scored nine points and added six rebounds for NKU, which is ranked 14th nationally in the NCAA Division II poll. Scott Bibbins finished with eight points and three assists.

"We played very hard, and we had really good ball movement, which really impressed (coach Bezold)," Dun-



NKU's DeAaron Williams elevates against Quincy on Saturday.

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can said. "I think it was very important that we come out and play solid defense, which caused Quincy a lot of problems offensively."

NKU bolted out to a 23-6 lead and Quincy never recovered. The Hawks trailed by as many as 31 points in the second half and never threatened the Norse, much to the delight of the crowd of 3,219 in attendance.



David McFarland goes to the basket during the first half Saturday afternoon.

"We're seeing a very good team developing that is going to continue to get better, and that is the scary, yet good part," Bezold said.

Two of the reasons for NKU's recent surge are Duncan and Malone, a pair of first-year players. Bezold said that duo's willingness to adapt to the NKU system has enabled the Norse to develop into a cohesive unit.

"There is always that double-edged sword with those kids that you bring in for one year. You really have to be careful, and we are so fortunate that they both have personalities that allow them to be part of the team," Bezold said. "They don't have big egos, and they both want to win."

Billy Baptist led Quincy (11-7, 4-5 GLVC) with 11 points. The Hawks made just 34 percent of their shots from the field and were 5-for-21 from 3-point range.

NKU remained tied with Bellarmine atop the GLVC East Division standings. The Norse hit the road next week for games at Lewis (Thursday) and Wisconsin-Parkside (Saturday).



NKU's Leslie Malone rejects a shot attempt by Justin Brock in the first half. Malone finished with 12 points, nine rebounds and two blocks.



Leslie Malone maneuvers inside against Quincy's Justin Brock during NKU's 71-52 victory Saturday afternoon. Malone finished with 12 points, nine rebounds and two blocks for the 14th-ranked Norse. On the right, Dennis Gagai drives to the basket for a shot.

