



Bellarmino feels right at home in Regents Hall



DeAaron Williams (left) attempts a jumper in the first half of NKU's 76-68 loss to Bellarmine on Thursday night. Williams finished with 14 points on 7-for-13 shooting from the field. On the right, A'Daeron Duncan slams down two points with a second-half dunk.

NKU finds no advantage in old digs during 76-68 loss to Knights

HIGHLAND HEIGHTS, Ky. - One team definitely felt right at home in Regents Hall on Thursday night.

Unfortunately for Northern Kentucky University, it was Bellarmine that found the one-time home for Norse hoops a favorable place in which to hold a Great Lakes Valley Conference showdown.

No. 10 NKU, with much at stake and playing inside Regents Hall for the first time this season, dropped a 76-68 decision to No. 19 Bellarmine before a packed house of 1,650. The loss eliminated NKU (20-6, 13-4 GLVC) from contention for the GLVC's overall No. 1 seed, which will go to the winner of Saturday's Rockhurst/Southern Indiana showdown in Kansas City, Mo.

Rockhurst and Southern Indiana both enter Saturday tied atop the GLVC West Division with 13-3 records. The GLVC West teams only play 17 league games this season.

NKU actually held a 13-point lead (38-25) with just more than two minutes remaining in the first half, but Bellarmine scored the final eight points to make it a 38-33 game at the

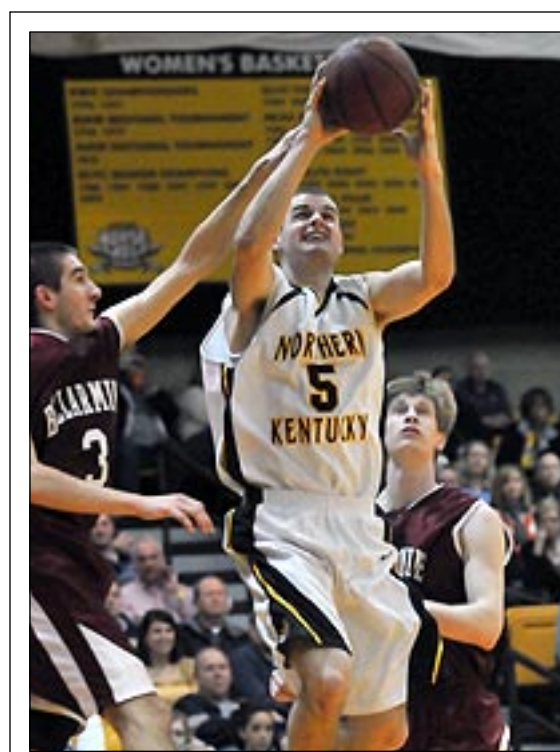
break.

"We had done so many things well to build a big lead, and then we let it slip away right before the half," NKU head coach Dave Bezold said. "Bellarmino made some big plays, and they made almost 57 percent of their shots from the field. It's hard to win like that against a very good team like Bellarmine."

NKU finished 13-0 this season in The Bank of Kentucky Center, but a scheduling conflict forced the Norse to move the final two home games back



Dave Bezold



Dustin Maguire goes strong to the basket during the first half Thursday night.

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to Regents Hall. NKU shot just 41.2 percent from the field, including 9-for-27 from 3-point range.

Bellarmine (22-5, 13-5 GLVC) placed four players in double figures, led by Nick Holmes with 19 points and 11 rebounds. Braydon Hobbs added 18 points, while Chartrael Hall scored 14 points and dished out a game-high 15 assists. Justin Benedetti finished with 14 points for the Knights, who defeated NKU in Regents Hall for the second straight season.



Nick Holmes scores while being fouled to cap a Bellarmine run in the second half.

Dustin Maguire paced NKU with 16 points, while teammates DeAaron Williams and Dennis Gagai each scored

14.

"To be honest, I don't really feel like we have a home-court advantage in this gym," Maguire said. "We played 13 games at The Bank of Kentucky Center and went undefeated."

After NKU sliced a 10-point lead to 59-58 with 7:09 remaining, Holmes scored nine of Bellarmine's next 11 points to give his team a 70-62 cushion. His conventional three-point play capped the 11-4 run that sealed the victory.

Bellarmine finished with a 36-28 rebounding advantage and assisted on 20 of its 26 baskets to sweep the season series with NKU for the first time since 1990-91.

NKU closes out the regular season Saturday when Lewis visits Regents Hall at 3:15 p.m. The Norse can still earn the GLVC East Division title outright by defeating Lewis.



NKU's Dennis Gagai attempts a shot in the second half while making contact with Bellarmine's Forrest Smallwood (5).



Bellarmine's Justin Benedetti (left) blocks out NKU's DeAaron Williams during the first half Thursday night. The 19th-ranked Knights rallied from a 13-point deficit to knock off No. 10 NKU, 76-68, in Regents Hall in a key GLVC East Division battle.