

Law scores 26 to lead Northwestern over Eastern Washington 86-72

EVANSTON, III. (AP) – After missing all of last season following shoulder surgery, Vic Law has returned like someone looking to make up for lost time.

Law scored a career-high 26 points - his second straight game establishing a new mark - to lead Northwestern to an 86-72 victory over Eastern Washington Monday night in a Legends Classic opening-round game.

Law, who had 19 points in the season opener, was 7-for-13 from the field.

"I just thought he played with great confidence," coach Chris Collins said. "I really liked how he attacked the basket."

Law, a 6-7 redshirt sophomore, was expected to be one of the Wildcats' top players this season, though Collins wasn't sure what to expect at the start.

"I know he's really good, but I was a little apprehensive," the coach said. "It's not easy sitting out a year and jumping right back in."

Bryant McIntosh had 18 points and Scottie Lindsey and Dererk Pardon each added 12 as Northwestern improved to 2-0.

Bogdan Bliznyuk led Eastern Washington (1-1) with 25 points on 10-for-18 shooting. He had 20 points on 8-for-13 shooting in the first half.

Jacob Wiley added 19 points on 8-for-11 shooting for the Eagles.

Bliznyuk had four points and took only three shots in the season-opening win over Division III Linfield. Northwestern quickly jumped out to a 15-point lead (24-9) less than nine minutes into the game and it appeared a second straight blow out was in order following the 94-63 opening win over Mississippi Valley State.

But Eastern fought back and pulled within 42-36 in the final minute of the first half. The Eagles were within six points (53-47) early in the second half, but that was as close as they would get - although Northwestern never was able to open a comfortable margin.

"I'm really pleased with how we played," Eastern coach Jim Hayford said. "I wish we could have played the first 10 minutes like we played the last 30 minutes."

"We definitely leave here with great respect for Northwestern, and I think we earned some respect from them as well."

SHARP SHOOTING

After going 1-for-7 from the free-throw line in the opener, Law was 9-for-10 on Monday.

"I think the first game I missed all the free throws so I could set a new career high tonight," he said jokingly.

BIG PICTURE

EWU: The Eagles were picked to finish fifth in the Big Sky in a preseason poll of media covering the conference following last season 18-16 finish. If nothing else, this is a scrappy bunch that played physical on both ends and refused to quit after falling behind early on the road against a Power 5 conference team.

Northwestern: Although the season is only two games old, Law clearly has emerged as the Wildcats' best player. The redshirt sophomore, who missed all of last season following shoulder surgery, has the versatile game and athleticism to be a threat every night.