



Norse give Bezold memorable 100th career win



NKU players, coaches and support staff pose for pictures after the Norse's 69-47 win against Bellarmine in the GLVC Tournament championship game Sunday. It marked the 100th career victory for NKU head coach Dave Bezold (kneeling in front row on the right).

NKU men crush Bellarmine in GLVC championship game, 69-47

EVANSVILLE, Ind. - A bad water pump that forced a Travel America bus to the side of the road was a championship omen for Northern Kentucky University men's basketball head coach Dave Bezold.

Stranded on the highway en route to the Great Lakes Valley Conference Tournament on Thursday thanks to a busted water pump, Bezold's Norse arrived in Evansville a bit late. Bezold laughed about it that afternoon, saying the last time a bus broke down, his team won a couple of games.

This time, NKU did one better, and captured the GLVC Tournament championship. The Norse won the championship Sunday afternoon by steamrolling Bellarmine, 69-47, in the PAC Arena.

NKU (24-6) won the GLVC Tournament championship for the first time since 2003 and captured the league's automatic bid to the NCAA Division II Tournament. The Norse



Dave Bezold

also gave Bezold his 100th career victory in memorable fashion.

"I was just happy we played well, but winning the GLVC

Tournament against a very good Bellarmine makes it very memorable," said Bezold, who reached 100 wins faster than any other coach in Norse history. "Dustin Maguire really ignited us early in the game, and we played a tremendous first half of basketball to build a huge lead."

Maguire scored NKU's first 16 points as the Norse built a 16-6 lead. The 6-foot-5 sophomore buried four 3-pointers during that spurt to completely deflate Bellarmine.



NKU head coach Dave Bezold displays the net after his team's victory on Sunday.

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“We did a great job of moving the ball against their defense, and I didn’t think Dustin was going to miss a shot with the way he was knocking them down,” Bezold said.

By halftime, NKU owned a 43-22 lead. The Norse led by as many as 28 points in the second half and avenged two regular-season losses to the Knights in resounding fashion.

Leslie Malone grabbed 15 rebounds and tied a GLVC Tournament record by blocking eight shots. Malone also finished the three-day event with a GLVC Tournament-record 15 rejections.

He was also voted as the GLVC Tournament’s most



Leslie Malone collects one of his eight blocked shots against Bellarmine.

outstanding player.

“Skinny controlled the inside with his blocks and rebounding,” Bezold said. “He was outstanding the entire tournament.”

DeAaron Williams led NKU with 19 points, and Maguire finished with 18. The Norse held Bellarmine to 31.4 percent shooting from the field and connected on 50 percent of their own attempts.

NKU was 10-for-17 from 3-point range. The Norse buried nine treys during the first half to take control of the game.

NKU will travel to Findlay, Ohio, for the NCAA Division II Midwest Regional. Unbeaten Findlay (30-0) is the host for the event, which begins next Saturday.

NKU is the No. 3 seed and will meet No. 6 seed Lake Superior State at noon Saturday in the opening round.



NKU’s Dustin Maguire goes past Bellarmine’s Oladapo Fagbenle for a basket during the first half. Maguire scored NKU’s first 16 points.



DeAaron Williams (33) embraces teammate A'Daeron Duncan moments after NKU’s 69-47 win in the GLVC Tournament championship game. Williams scored 19 points for the Norse. On the right, NKU head coach Dave Bezold holds the championship trophy in postgame celebration.

