



MENDOCINO-LAKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT NEWS RELEASE

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EAGLES OPEN SEASON WITH 83-72 WIN OVER FOLSOM LAKE

Written by: Joe Langstaff

Tuesday evening the Mendocino College men's basketball team opened its 2018-2019 season with a non-conference 83-72 win over the visiting Folsom Lake College Falcons.

The two teams also played last season at Folsom in the Eagles second game of the 2017-2018 season. The Eagles won that game, too, beating the Falcons by a score of 101-79. It was Folsom Lake College's first season to field a men's basketball program.

The Eagles finished the 2017-2018 season tied for third place in the Bay Valley Conference with a 10-6 conference record and 18-9 overall. The Falcons were 1-15 and 2-23 in the program's first year as members of the Big 8 Conference.

Eagles head coach Billy Offill, now in his 10th year at the helm of the Eagles, had said he expected the Falcons to be better in the second year of their program and probably looking for a little payback for the Eagles scoring 100-plus points on the Falcon's court last season.

The Eagles starting five on Tuesday were sophomore point guard Diego Reyes, sophomore guard Jared Strate, sophomore forward Larry Bryson, sophomore forward Bymnet Tecle, and sophomore forward Gabe Knight. Reyes, Strate, Bryson were returners from last season's team. Tecle and Knight are new additions to the team, Knight having redshirted last year as a transfer.

The Eagles took the first lead in the game on a trey by Bryson from the top of the arc on the Eagles' second possession of the game.

Folsom answered with similar three by guard Matt Lyon to tie the score.

Neither team scored on its next three possessions, the third possession for Folsom Lake ending with on a steal by the Eagles. On the steal, a fast-break layup was attempted, missed, but a follow-up layup by Bryson give the Eagles a 5-3 lead.

The Eagles made another defensive stop when Bryson made a block, resulting in a Strate fast-break layup to make the score 7-3 Eagles.

Another stop for the Eagles defense resulted in another fast-break layup, one by Tecle, making the score 9-3.



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The Falcons broke that Eagles' string of points when Lyon was fouled and made both free throws.

Knight was fouled on a drive through the paint, converting both free throws and prompting a Falcon's timeout with 15:45 showing on the clock and the Eagles up 11-5.

Hitting the boards for second and third chance opportunities, the Falcons drew a foul on a putback attempt and made one of two charities.

Before the half ended, the Falcons would make seven more trips to the line and end up the half shooting a total of 18 free throws, making 14.

At the near mid-half point, with 10:15 showing on the clock, a Strate drive along the baseline increased the Eagles' lead to 22-9, bringing another Folsom timeout.

On the Falcon's first possession after the timeout, sophomore center Cole Kinslow made a block, with the Eagles converting a driving layup on their next possession to go up 15.

Folsom rallied with a run to close to within 5 at 26-21 with 6:29 to play in the half and then converted a one-and-one to close to 26-23.

The Eagles stemmed the tide when Knight was fouled on a drive through the paint and made both free throws to bump the Eagles' lead up to 28-23. The Eagles called a timeout with 4:59 on the clock.

Two scoreless possessions for each side was followed by a Folsom free throw with 3:28 on the clock, the Eagles lead cut to 4 points.

It quickly jumped to 7 points when freshman guard Freddy Bryant hit a three from the top of the arc. The Eagles made a steal on the Falcons' next possession, missing a fast-break dunk attempt, but getting the offensive board.

Knight hit a trey from the right top of the arc, bumping the lead up to 37-24 with 1:17 to play in the half. He then got a defensive board at the other end of the court.

Tecele hit a trey from the top of the arc with 42 seconds left in the half, making the score 40-24. Before the half ended Folsom made two more free throws to make a halftime score of 40-26.

The Eagles came out strong in the second half, getting a pair of threes from Strate, another by Knight, two free throws by Reyes and then another three by Strate to push their lead up to 54-32 three minutes into the half.

But five Eagles' scoreless possession saw Folsom trim 7 points off that lead. Yet another Eagles trey, this one by freshman guard Landon Garcia-Floyd, stopped the Folsom run and made the score 57-39 with a 13:53 still to play.

Two possessions later lefty-shooting freshman Kevin Deel knocked down a trey to keep the margin at 18 a 60-42.



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Folsom answered with a trey, but Deel made it back-to-back treys hitting another one on the ensuing possession, the score now 63-45.

A driving layup by Garcia-Floyd made it a 20-point lead at 65-45. But Folsom kept on plugging away, crafting a 9-0 run to cut the Eagles' lead down to 11 at 65-54.

The Eagles broke the run on a Tecle three, with the Eagles calling a timeout with 8:24 still to play, the lead now 68-54.

When play resumed a Folsom putback was answered by Bryant trey. After a defensive stop, the Eagles added two more points back onto their lead when Strate drove the baseline for a layup, making the score 73-56.

It was still that score when Strate hit his fourth trey of the game with just over 5 minutes left to play, the Eagles' lead back up to 19 at 76-57.

The Falcons got a couple stops and scored 4 points on two consecutive trips to the line. They called a timeout with 4:13 to play.

Bryant hit his third three of the evening to bump the lead to 18 at 79-61. At the 2-minute mark, the Eagles' lead was 17 at 81-64.

The Falcons kept plugging away, but time was not on their side. In the time remaining, they scored 8 points to the Eagles' 2. But those points only make the final score a bit more respectable, the Eagles winning by 83-72.

Lyon was the game-higher scorer with 25 points. The Falcons had two other players score in double figures; Isiah Maun with 15 and Zethan Dumpson with 13.

With every Eagles player seeing action, there were scoring contributions from several players. Strate was the Eagles leading scorer with 18. Knight had 13. Bryant and Garcia-Floyd had 9 each. Bryson, Deel and Tecle had 8 each. Reyes had 6 and freshman guard Divon Davis-Boddie contributed 4. The Eagles made 17 treys.

The Eagles pulled down 41 rebounds. Ten Eagles had at least 1 board, the leader Strate with 8. Davis-Boddie had 7, Kinslow 5, Bryson and Garcia-Floyd 4 apiece.

The Eagles assist-to-turnovers ratio was slightly to the plus side at 16-14. They shot only 10 free throws, making 6.

Coach Offill, commenting afterwards, felt that "overall it was good first effort from our guys, a nice first game. I was glad to get all my guys in there. We were pretty balanced. I thought we played pretty hard and did a pretty good job. I think we shot the ball pretty well. But we got outshot at the foul line. The guys were pulling for each other on the bench. It's nice to be 1-0 and get that first game out of the way."

Offill note some areas that needed improvement. "We still have a whole lot to work on and get better. We need to be better in transition, better defensively. We weren't great in transition tonight."



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Offill credited Folsom with improvement in the program's second year. "They are a talented team. Their point guard (Lyon) is really good. I thought he had a really good game. In the second half, Divon Davis-Boddie and Diego Reyes kind of kept him in check. We were able to mix in some man zone."

Offill offered his thoughts on other Eagles players' performances in the game. "Jared Strate had a really nice night. He's tough. He took an elbow to the face early. He played through all that. He hit a bunch of three and got to the rack. He's rounded into a nice player for us. I'm excited for his sophomore season. That's a guy who's really worked his tail off to get where he's at right now. It was a nice game for him to come out and lead us in scoring. The guys are looking for him. They know how well he can shoot."

"Our bigs, Cole Kinslow and Bymnet Teclé, had good games. Larry Bryson was electric early. He had a big put down and made a couple threes. He was really relishing tonight. I think he was excited to play. He started every game for us last year. He gave us a good punch early while Gabe (Knight) was still feeling it out, having been out for a while (redshirting last year). Gabe had a nice stretch there where he showed some of the things he can do."

"We can play matchup with this group. Tonight we went late with Landon Garcia-Floyd. Freddie Bryant had a nice game off the bench. He hit some big threes. He had some good stuff going and so did Diego. We put that three-headed monster at the guard and spread them out. They couldn't guard us, Garcia-Floyd especially. He got going downhill and got some big buckets. He's a pretty good player."

The perennial powerhouse Butte College Roadrunners from the Golden Valley Conference are the Eagles' next opponent. The game tips off at 6 p.m. on Saturday on the Eagles court.

Offill feels "We'll be really challenged Saturday night against Butte. We'll have to be better against Butte. Butte's going to be a lot tougher. We have to really get ready for them."

Going into Saturday's game, Butte will have played three more games than the Eagles.

Butte opened its season by playing in the Tony Costello Tip-Off Classic tournament at Los Positas College, November 1-3. In Butte's first game of that tournament, they lost to Canada College 80-75. In the second game, they lost to Las Positas 79-62. In the third game they beat Sacramento City College 68-56.

On Wednesday of this week, the Roadrunners played Sierra College at home, winning that game in overtime by a score of 91-89 and evening their record to 2-2.

The Eagles played Butte in the Eagles' first game last season. The Eagles strong second-half effort came up a bit short in that game, with Butte winning by a 78-70 score.

The Eagles game with Butte will also mark the Eagles 10th Annual Plowshares Basketball Benefit. Fans coming to the game can receive free admission if they bring and donate 3 canned goods or personal items (such as deodorant, shampoo, conditioner, toothbrushes, toothpaste, etc.). The donations benefit Plowshares and the local community. The regular price of admission is \$6.



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More information on the benefit can be found at Mendocino.edu, by calling 707.468.3255. More information about the Plowshares program can be found at plowsharesfeeds.org.

Next week the Eagles will host their annual 3-day John Hogue Memorial Tournament, starting on Thursday, November 15 and running through Saturday the 17th.

In addition to the host Eagles, the tournament will include teams from Los Medanos, Consumnes River, Modesto, Redwoods, Sacramento City, Lassen and Cerro Coso Colleges.

The Eagles' first game of that tournament will be at 6 p.m. on Thursday, vs. Cerro Coso.