



Northeastern University

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## 10 Plus 1



The Huskies have one of the longest winning streaks in the nation. Photo by Jim Pierce.

## January 22, 2010

Northeastern's resounding 74-62 victory over conference foe Virginia Commonwealth on Saturday afternoon pushed the Huskies' winning streak to 11 games, the third longest current streak in the nation and the program's longest since an 11-game roll during the 1986-87 season.

Coaches and players attributed the team's recent success to a renewed sense of urgency on the defensive side of the ball. The Huskies have allowed fewer than 55 points per game during their winning streak. Over the first nine games of the season, Northeastern surrendered more than 68 points per game.

"Our defense is 10 times better than it was at the beginning of the season," says senior forward and team captain Matt Janning. Janning is averaging a team-high 16.1 points per game. "We've put pressure on every team we've played over the last few weeks. We're putting pressure on the guards and it's leading to offense."

After starting December with five losses in a row, Northeastern found the win column for the first time in nearly a month on Christmas Day, defeating Southern Methodist University in a consolation game of the Hawaiian Airlines Diamond Head Classic in Honolulu.

The Huskies (13-7) haven't lost since. And their impressive play is catching the attention of local sports writers, including *Boston Globe* sports columnist Bob Ryan.

"Right now the standard bearers for local Division 1 college basketball are Northeastern and Harvard. How about that?" he wrote last Monday in a Boston.com blog post.

The Huskies are determined to reach the National Collegiate Athletic Association Tournament this year. Last year, Northeastern beat Wyoming in the first round of the College Basketball Invitational before succumbing to the University of Texas at El Paso.

Coach Bill Coen hopes this year's squad can build on last season's success.

"I have a tremendous group of young men who are focused on the task at hand," he says. "They go out and compete every day and do the best they can."

Janning set his sights on the NCAA Tournament even before his club started reeling off victory after victory. The team won only two of its first nine games, but, says Janning, "I kept telling family and friends that we would bounce back. The NCAA [tournament] is the only place we want to end up and we definitely have the group of players to do it."

The Huskies go for 12 straight wins when they take on Drexel on Wednesday at 7 p.m. at Matthews Arena.

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