

## Popovic Reaches Milestone; Boston College Beats EWU 72-68

**BOSTON (AP)** -- Nik Popovic will certainly remember his free throw that gave him 1,000 points in his Boston College career.

His coach and teammates will likely recall the pair from the line that helped BC survive at the end. Popovic scored 13 points that included his two clutch free throws with 8.2 seconds left and became the 45th player at BC to reach 1,000 points in a 72-68 victory over Eastern Washington on Wednesday night in the Gotham Classic.

Clinging to a one-point lead, BC guard Derryck Thornton missed the front end of a 1-and-1 and Popovic jumped to his right, snatching the key rebound.

"That's just something we do," said Popovic, a 6-foot-11 senior forward. "You have to get ready to make a hustle play."

His free throws then made it 71-66.

"It's just maturity because of the way he approaches it," BC coach Jim Christian said. "You come and practice hard and it carries into the game. That's why he's been consistent, that's why he's gained more confidence. It's all in the approach."

Popovic reached the 1,000-point mark with a free throw that gave BC a 52-47 edge with 10:30 remaining. Jay Heath scored 17 points, including a key 3-pointer in the closing two minutes for BC (4-1). Thornton had 14 points and Jared Hamilton added had 12. Popovic had 12 rebounds and Heath added eight.

Jacob Davison led Eastern Washington (2-2) with 26 points and Kim Aiken Jr. had 17 with 13 boards.

"Yeah, it's tough because there's plays to be made in that game," Eastern Washington coach Shantay Legans said. "An offensive rebound on the free throw, we've got to get that ball."

After Tyler Robertson's 3-pointer from the left corner gave Eastern Washington a 65-64 edge with 1:58 to play, Heath answered with his 3 just 17 seconds later.

Aiken then missed a 3, and BC's Steffon Mitchell was fouled and nailed both from the line with 25 seconds left.

Neither team held more than a two-possession lead — except for 17 seconds — in the second half.

It was the first meeting between the schools and part of the Gotham Classic, which features five schools (along with Belmont, High Point and Saint Louis).