



Neenah's Klesmit parlays huge showing on big stage into commitment to Wofford

-
- **By** [Mark Miller](#)

• 08/06/2019, 1:45pm CDT



Max Klesmit

Neenah senior [Max Klesmit](#) is the very definition of staying the course.

The extremely talented and consistently productive guard, coming off a huge junior season for coach Lee Rabas at Neenah, entered the spring with no NCAA Division I scholarship offers.

That, of course, isn't unusual in and of itself as in a typical year just a handful of players in Wisconsin end up earning offers at that level.

But for a 6-foot-3 combination guard who averaged 24.5 points, 4.8 rebounds and 4.8 assists competing in the ultra-tough Fox Valley Association while also leading his team to a spot in the WIAA Division 1 State Tournament, it was a bit of a head scratcher.

In the spring, Klesmit piled up some offers from NCAA Division II programs while competing for the Wisconsin Blizzard 17U squad coached by Rich Kuranda.

But still no Division I offer.

Instead of complaining and pointing fingers, though, Klesmit continued to work hard on his game, continued to play with energy and emotion, both for Neenah and the Blizzard, and continued to have faith that his time would come.

And then, he picked up his first offer from a Division I program in July when new North Dakota coach Paul Sather called to offer Klesmit a scholarship to the Summit League program.

"I remember the exact moment when I got the offer from North Dakota ... I was in the car with my mom driving back home from Homestead after our last game at the NY2LA event," Klesmit said. "I was just extremely thankful North Dakota felt I could play at that level. With the first offer, I remember thinking, 'This is really happening. Someone believes you can play at that level.' When it finally happened, it was pretty awesome."

Others, including Green Bay, Milwaukee and Wofford, began to express serious interest, though no additional offers came his way.

That is until Klesmit turned in what could be described as the performance of the summer by a Wisconsin high school player.

Competing for the Blizzard in the Las Vegas Bigtime Tournament on Saturday, July 27, Klesmit went off for 37 points in an overtime loss to a Vegas Elite squad that featured two of the top 10 prospects in the 2020 class in Jalen Green (6-3) and Joshua Christopher (6-4).

"It was an awesome experience," Klesmit said of the contest. "LeBron James watched our entire game so that added to the craziness of the night. Our whole team went into the game thinking, 'what do we have to lose? Nobody expects us to win.' We let it slip at the end, but it was still an awesome experience."

"I wasn't thinking about how much I was scoring in the moment. We had plenty of other guys on our team who hit big-time shots as well. It was awesome to be a part of that game and atmosphere in my last AAU game."

Video of Klesmit's strong showings quickly hit the internet and schools stepped up their interest level, big time.

Green Bay and Milwaukee offered scholarships within days and Wofford, which began showing interest earlier in July, was excited to get Klesmit on campus for a visit the following weekend.

"I was not in contact with Wofford until early July," Klesmit said. "Assistant coach Will Murphy watched me play in early July and then they started to recruit me. Toward the mid-part of July, we had set up a visit with Wofford. They called after the Las Vegas game and said they couldn't wait to get me down there."

Staying the course, continuing to work hard, and having faith in his abilities had finally paid off for Klesmit, who verbally committed to Wofford two days ago.

"This could not have happened to a nicer kid," Kuranda said. "He's the type of kid everybody would want to call their own. Just a super kid all the way around.

"Both Green and Christopher guarded Max at times in our game and he was able to score against both. It's was just a crazy game in a crazy atmosphere. We were up seven points with a minute and a half left, and ended up losing in overtime. But Max was the best player on the floor."

Klesmit made all eight of his foul shots and drilled 7 of 9 shots from beyond three-point range in the contest. In addition to scoring 37 points, he also had eight rebounds and five assists.

"We talked before the game about keeping our composure and not to fall for their antics when they blocked a shot or had a dunk and got in our faces," Kuranda said. "Max just shot the lights out, and he has shot better than I expected all year for us.

"The best part of Max's game, though, is his pace. He changes speeds very well. He knows when to walk it up and when to push it and pull up for a three. He's a very tough cover for opponents because he can also get to the hoop."

Klesmit joins a very respected Wofford program that also includes former Middleton standout Storm Murphy.

"Wofford has a great group of guys with high character," said Klesmit, who plans to study business in college. "The campus is very nice. Everything is super new. Everything on campus is close so it gives you a family feel. Wofford has a lot of stuff going on around the campus and the basketball program is really at a high level. I'm excited to get there and develop my game even more."

For the latest and most up to date boys' basketball news and recruiting information, follow Mark on Twitter [@wisbbyearbook](#). Email story ideas, recruiting info, etc. to Mark by [clicking here](#).