

## **UAlbany Men's Basketball's Nichols Playing Well At Right Time**

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ALBANY — At the right time, David Nichols is starting to play like David Nichols for the University at Albany men's basketball team.

For a Great Danes squad looking to continue making their push as the America East postseason nears, that's been the best development of the past few weeks.

"He's [just] playing better, to be honest with you," UAlbany head coach Will Brown said Friday. "I think he's picking and choosing his spots better."

To be clear: Nichols' junior season was never a lost cause. For the season, Nichols is at 15.2 points per game on 41.0 percent shooting from the field and 38.0 percent shooting from 3.

But, recently, he's surged as UAlbany (8-5, 20-8) readies to play Sunday at UMBC (9-3, 18-9).

In a seven-game stretch concluding with his 25-point effort Thursday at UMass Lowell on 9 of 14 shooting, Nichols has averaged 16.6 points per game on 52.8 percent shooting. From 3-point territory during that stretch, he's shooting 55.9 percent.

"I never lack confidence," Nichols said. "I know what I can do on the court. It was really everybody else — I feel like — panicking."

What's striking, though, is that Nichols has boosted his scoring in recent games despite taking fewer shots. In the Great Danes' last seven games, Nichols took eight or fewer shots three times after taking at least 10 shots in each of UAlbany's first 21 games.

"I can count on one hand how many times I've gotten on him for taking bad shots in the last few games," Brown said. "I think he's letting the game come to him a little bit more."

"I'm just not really forcing things," Nichols said. "Just realizing — just picking my spots better."

UAlbany has also shifted Nichols off ball more in recent weeks, allowing him stretches to focus on his own scoring rather than always needing to run the offense. More important, though, is that Nichols is dealing better with pain that's lingered in his right wrist for much of the season.

"I'm playing through it now," Nichols said. "I don't really pay attention to it anymore. It's not really affecting my play. It more affects when we're lifting weights, what I can do in the weight room, honestly."