

2-25-2014

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Eastern Michigan University

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Recommended Citation

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Eastern Returns to the Convo For Three Straight

Wednesday, Feb. 26, 2014 » 7:06 p.m. » Convocation Center (8,784) » Ypsilanti, Mich.



2/25/2014 10:02:00 AM

YPSILANTI, Mich. (EMUEagles.com) - After dropping two in a row on the road, the Eastern Michigan University men's basketball team is ready to return home for three-straight games to be played at the Convocation Center. The Eagles (15-12,7-7 MAC) will open the final homestand of the 2013-14 season by welcoming Central Michigan University to Ypsilanti, Feb. 26. The Chippewas (10-16, 3-11 MAC) are coming in after winning two-straight conference tilts, most recently topping Northern Illinois University, 70-67, at McGuirk Arena on Sunday, Feb. 23.

POOR FREE THROW SHOOTING PLAGUES EMU IN LOSS TO WESTERN: It was a foul-plagued contest as the Eastern Michigan team dropped a 75-67 decision on the road at University Arena to Western Michigan University Sunday, Feb. 23, in a game which saw 55 fouls called. The Eagles led the Broncos by three in the second half, but were unable to hold on for a win. Despite [Darell Combs](#) scoring 21 points for the Eagles, it was David Brown and Shayne Whittington who stole the show inside of Read Fieldhouse. Brown poured in 20 points for WMU, while Whittington notched a double-double, posting 22 points and grabbing 11 off of the glass.

FINDING THE GAME AT HOME: The Eagles' contest with the Chippewas will hit the airwaves of 89.1 FM (WEMU). In addition to the WEMU broadcast, fans can watch the game live on Eastern Michigan's live streaming program, Eagle All-Access. Subscriptions to Eagle All-Access start at just \$6.95 and can be purchased at EMUEagles.com/showcase.

Veteran "Voice of the Eagles" Chad Bush will serve as EMU's play-by-play announcer for the WEMU broadcast, while [Sean Hostetter](#) will join the broadcast as the analyst.

ALL-TIME AGAINST THE CHIPPEWAS: The Eagles are behind in the series with Central Michigan, 88-98, and CMU is Eastern's most common opponent since starting varsity basketball in 1897-98. Since taking over the EMU basketball program, [Rob Murphy](#) has seen Central on five different occasions, winning just two of them. Most recently, the Eagles knocked off Central on the road at McGuirk Arena, 72-59, back on Jan. 18.

Last time out, [Mike Talley](#) was the high-scorer in the game, tying his career-best 21 points on 6-of-13 shooting. In addition, Talley was a perfect 8-for-8 from the free throw line. [Karrington Ward](#) owned the glass for EMU pulling down a career-high 15 rebounds to go along with 15 points. [Raven Lee](#) provided 10 points off the bench, going 4-of-7 from the floor. As a team, the Green and White shot 43.8 percent from the floor (21-of-48) while knocking down 82.9 percent (29-of-35) of their shots at the charity stripe.

MURPHY VERSUS THE MAC: Third-year Head Men's Basketball Coach [Rob Murphy](#) holds a 23-23 all-time record against Mid-American Conference opponents in his third MAC season. The Detroit, Mich. native won the MAC-West Division Title in 2011-12 during his first season as the head man at EMU before going 7-9 last season. Murphy and his squads have seen most of their success against teams from their own division, going 16-10, while they are just 7-13 against the East Division.

WEST COAST SWING: After eight games versus the East Division of the Mid-American Conference and just two against MAC West opponents in the first 10 games of the conference schedule, the Eagles are in the midst of completing the 18-game league schedule with eight-straight contests facing West Division foes.

THE WESTERN WAY: Since [Rob Murphy](#) took over as the head coach at Eastern Michigan, he has enjoyed much more success against the Eagles' side of the conference, including a MAC West Championship during the 2011-12 campaign. In contrast, he holds a 7-13 record versus the other side. So far this season, the Green and White maintains a 4-2 record against MAC West opponents, after defeating, Ball State, Central Michigan, Toledo and Western Michigan.

CHIP DIPS ARE ON POINT: Eastern Michigan comes into Wednesday's contest on a two-game losing streak, while the Chippewas are on their way into Ypsilanti after winning two-straight conference games for the first time all season.

CAN'T CALL IT A COMEBACK: Eastern Michigan trailed by 12 points with 15:53 to go in the second half. Looking at that deficit, the Eagles mounted a comeback and tied the game at 52 points with 11:20 to go. Finally, EMU took its first lead since the first half with 8:49 on the clock, 57-56, but with the score tied at 62, the Green and White lost the lead at 4:32 and was never able to regain it.

SOME BAD BLOOD: After a pair of contests with Western Michigan, it seems as though a heated rivalry has emerged between the two Michigan-based institutions. As well as chippy play and choice words from each team, there was a total of four technical fouls called in two games, as well as an intentional foul on [Darell Combs](#) and a flagrant foul which got David Brown of WMU ejected from the contest.

COMBS LIGHTS UP UNIVERSITY ARENA: Junior college transfer [Darell Combs](#) put the team on his back in the second half of Sunday's 75-67 loss at Western Michigan. With nearly 16 minutes to play, Combs drove the lane and finished a layup on EMU's next possession which sparked a 15-4 run in favor of the Eagles. During that run, Combs

hit on three triple tries and scored 13 of the team's 15 points which led to the first tie of the game since the first half, 52-52. In total, Combs went 8-of-16 shooting, while hitting a trio of three pointers, good for 21 points.

NORTHERN ILLINOIS ON THE HORIZON: Eastern Michigan has Northern Illinois as its next opponent on the grueling 18-game MAC schedule, March 1. The Green and White will host NIU for a 2 p.m. afternoon contest. The Eagles are looking for revenge against a team who defeated the Eagles in a double overtime contest, when EMU fell to the Huskies, 61-59, at the NIU Convocation Center earlier this year, Feb. 20.

AGAINST MICHIGAN SCHOOLS: In their 117-year history, the Eagles have squared off with all six current NCAA Division I institutions, seeing Central Michigan the most times. Overall, the Green and White hold a 165-275 record against those teams, which include Central Michigan, Detroit, Michigan, Michigan State, Oakland and Western Michigan.

THE BEST AT WHAT WE DO: Eastern Michigan prides itself on its defense. With that being the case, it should come as no surprise that EMU holds teams to one of the lowest shooting percentages in the country. Actually, according to NCAA.com's Feb. 24 update, the Eagles have the best shooting percentage defense in the country. After holding Toledo to a sub-26 percent performance, EMU moved into first in the category at 36.6 percent. Southern Methodist University is the next closest in the category at 36.6 percent.

THE BLOCK KING: [Da'Shonte Riley](#)'s seven blocked shots versus Toledo moved him into second all-time in blocks in Eastern Michigan history. In addition to his 173 career blocks, Riley currently has 81 blocks this season, which is 15 shy of Theron Wilson's top-mark of 96 set during the 1992-93 season. If Riley stays at his current pace of three per game, he will tie Wilson after the first MAC Tournament game in which EMU plays.

DEFENSIVE EXPERTISE: The EMU squad has shown that it is one of the elite defensive units in college basketball this season. According to the NCAA statistics as of Feb. 24, 2014, the Eagles rank 26th in scoring defense, allowing 62.5 ppg, while they're No. 13 in the country in blocks at 6.1 per contest. The Green and White swipes the ball 8.6 times per game, which is the 13th-most steals per game, and holds teams to just a 29.9 percent three point field goal percentage, good for 16th in the country. The Eagles' most impressive stat is that they are holding teams to a 36.6 field goal percentage. This number ranks as the best in the nation.