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EMU Men's Football: Chris Creighton Named EMU Head Football Coach December 11, 2013

Eastern Michigan University

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Chris Creighton Named EMU Head Football Coach

Creighton is the 37th full-time head coach in the program's 122-year history

INTRODUCING AN
ERA OF EXCELLENCE

HEAD COACH
CHRIS CREIGHTON



#EAGLESUNITE

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YPSILANTI, Mich. (EMUEagles.com) — [Chris Creighton](#), the head football coach at Drake University for the past six years, has been named the new head football coach at Eastern Michigan University, Vice President/Director of Intercollegiate Athletics [Heather Lyke](#) announced today, Dec. 11. Creighton will be formally introduced to the EMU community Thursday, Dec. 12, at 3 p.m. with a press conference inside the atrium of the Convocation Center. The press conference will be streamed live at [EMUEagles.com](#).

The 44-year old Creighton has built the Bulldogs into a consistent power in the Pioneer Football League, sharing the conference crown during the 2011 and 2012 campaigns. During his 17-year head coaching career, he has accumulated eight conference titles and an all-time record of 139-46 (.764 winning percentage). He departs Drake with the highest winning percentage in school history (.667) after also posting 63 wins as the head coach at Wabash College and 32 at Ottawa University.

"It is with great pride that we introduce [Chris Creighton](#) as our new head football coach," Lyke said. "In Chris, Eastern Michigan will find an extraordinary leader who will be a great

ambassador for our University. During the search process, Chris' focus on positively impacting the lives of our student-athletes and building a championship program was most impressive. As a proven winner and head coach, Chris' experience with creating and sustaining success will inspire our student-athletes to elevate our football program to a championship level."

"I want to sincerely thank [Heather Lyke](#), President Martin and the Board of Regents for entrusting me with the leadership of the Eastern Michigan University football program," said Creighton. "It is both a huge opportunity and responsibility and I am fired up about it. My vision is to make playing football at Eastern Michigan one of the most incredible experiences of our players lives. I cannot wait to meet the team and start a new journey with them."

In his six seasons at the helm of the Bulldogs, Creighton racked up a 35-13 (.729) record in Pioneer Football League action and a 31-9 (.775) record the last five seasons. Just the seventh DU coach to win 40 or more games and the fastest to do so, Creighton needed just 60 games.

In his time at Drake, Creighton boasted a 30-5 home record and a 21-2 home conference record going undefeated against five conference opponents. Drake had an 11-game home win streak during Creighton's tenure as well as winning 16-straight home conference games with him at the helm.

In 2013, the Bulldogs finished with a 6-5 record for their 10th consecutive winning season. Four players earned first team honors, five were named to the second team and two garnered a spot on the honorable mention team. Drake led the Pioneer Football League with 10 student-athletes earning spots on the Academic All-PFL teams.

In 2012, he led the Bulldogs to their second straight Pioneer Football League title and the sixth PFL championship in program history with an 8-3 record and a 7-1 mark in league play. The 2012 team was led by one of his star pupils in record-setting quarterback Mike Piatkowski. The signal caller set nearly every Bulldog single-season and career passing mark under Creighton's tutelage.

Seventeen Bulldogs earned All-PFL honors following the 2012 championship and six were named to the PFL All-Academic Team, including three student-athletes that also garnered CapitalOne/CoSIDA Academic All-District honors. A school-record 63 Bulldogs were also named to the PFL Academic Honor Roll.

In 2011, Creighton's fourth Bulldogs' team won nine games and tied for the Pioneer Football League title with a 7-1 conference record. It was Drake's fifth PFL crown and first since 2004.

The Bulldogs' head coach was recognized for the job he did by being named one of 20 finalists for the 2011 Eddie Robinson Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) Coach of the Year Award. A league-leading 18 Bulldogs received All-PFL honors and a PFL-best nine Drake student-athletes were named Academic All-PFL. In addition, a then school-record 61 Bulldogs were named to the PFL Academic Honor Roll for achieving a grade-point average of 3.0 or above.

The energetic, but veteran coach was named a winner of the Giant Steps Award presented by the National Consortium for Academics and Sports as part of National Student-Athlete Day on April 6, 2011. Creighton, awarded in the Coaching category, was one of just five 2011 winners of the Giant Steps Award, given annually to individuals who use sport to positively affect social change, actualizing the mission of the NCAS. The awards honor student-athletes, athletic administrators, civic leaders, coaches, parents, organizations, and other individuals who demonstrate an outstanding ability to manage life on and off the field, and who demonstrate a commitment to the betterment of society.

During his distinguished career, Creighton has taken great pride in the student-athlete experience that transcends to the football field and the classroom. In his career, Creighton has taken his teams on three overseas trips, including a 2011 trip to Tanzania, to go along with ventures to Austria and Panama while head coach at Division III Wabash.

Drake's two-week experience in Africa in 2011 for the inaugural Global Kilimanjaro Bowl included significant service projects in orphanages and schools, the ascension of 19,340-foot Mt. Kilimanjaro and a victory over a Mexican collegiate all-star team in the Kili Bowl-the first game of American football played on African soil.

With that trip setting the foundation for the Bulldogs' 2011 season, the team adopted the theme "Tupande Kileleni," a Swahili term that translates to "Let's climb to the summit." The summit, for Drake, became the quest to perform to its full potential and symbolized the climb to the top of the Pioneer Football League standings, which it achieved.

The 2010 Bulldogs featured a defense that ranked sixth in the nation among FCS schools (2nd PFL) in rush defense (94.2), eighth (3rd PFL) in sacks (3.0) and 18th (2nd PFL) in tackles for loss (7.4). In addition, the special teams excelled in punt coverage (5th NCAA FCS/1st PFL, 3.4), kickoff coverage (5th NCAA/1st PFL, 16.1) and punt return average (15th NCAA/1st PFL; 13.53).

Creighton's Bulldogs also featured eight players named to the Academic All-PFL team (three 1st-team, five 2nd-team) and a then school-record 55 earning a place on the PFL's Academic Honor Roll.

In 2009, picked to finish sixth in the preseason coaches' poll, Creighton guided Drake to an 8-3 record, including a 6-2 third-place finish in the Pioneer Football League. Drake matched its best nine-game start in history (8-1) that year, while riding a six-game mid-season winning streak.

Creighton's first Drake club in 2008 went 6-5 and finished in a tie for fourth in the PFL.

Ranked fourth among all active NCAA Division III football coaches in career winning percentage upon his hire at Drake, Creighton served as head coach at Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Ind., from 2001-07 where he constructed a 63-15 record (.808) with his teams winning four North Coast Athletic Conference championships, while competing in three NCAA Division III playoffs.

During his final three years at Wabash, Creighton led the Little Giants to a 30-5 record (.857) including three straight league championships and appearances in the 2005 and 2007 NCAA Division III playoffs.

Wabash posted a 11-2 record in 2007, competing in the NCAA Division III playoffs while being ranked No. 8 in the final NCAA Division III coaches' poll. Wabash went 12-1 in 2002 and 11-1 in 2005, capping both seasons with appearances in the NCAA Division III playoffs.

As offensive coordinator at Wabash, Creighton's teams averaged 35 points per game with the multiple offense producing the school's all-time leading rusher and passer. Three starting quarterbacks received All-America honors.

Under Creighton, Wabash won conference championships in 2002, '05, '06 and '07. He coached 83 all-conference players, including seven who earned conference player of the year honors, along with 13 All-Americans. Creighton was named North Coast Athletic Conference Coach of the Year in 2002, '05 and '07, as well as the Kansas Collegiate Athletic Conference Coach of the Year in 1997.

Creighton was head coach at Ottawa (Kan.) University from 1997-2000, compiling a record of 32-9 (.780).

The San Francisco, Calif., native produced one of the greatest single season turnarounds in NAIA history during his first year at Ottawa in 1997. Inheriting a team that posted a record of 1-8 the previous season, Creighton guided his club to a 9-2 finish en route to capturing its first Kansas Collegiate Athletic Conference title since 1972. He also led Ottawa to a conference championship in 2000 along with appearances in the NAIA playoffs in '97 and 2000.

Creighton served as offensive coordinator at Concordia (Ill.) from 1991-92 and Manchester (Ind.) from 1993-96 before becoming head coach at Ottawa.

In 1993, Creighton was the head coach and quarterback of the Limhamn Griffins in Malmo, Sweden, as he helped guide the franchise to its first national championship.

As an All-America quarterback, Creighton led Kenyon (Ohio) College to its only North Coast Athletic Conference title in 1989 and was named conference player of the year after setting single-season conference records for passing yardage (2,843) and touchdowns (29). He was inducted into the Kenyon College Athletic Hall of Fame in 2008.

Creighton earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Kenyon College in 1991 and a master's degree from Concordia (Ill.) University in 1993.

Creighton is the first active head coach to be hired at Eastern Michigan since Jim Harkema in 1983. Harkema was the head coach at Grand Valley State University (1973-82) before taking over the EMU program and leading it to its only Mid-American Conference Championship in 1987 and last bowl appearance.

He will be paid \$400,000 annually as part of a five-year contract and he will have incentives for victories, post-season opportunities, radio and high level of performance in Mid-American Conference play.

Chris and his wife, Heather, have two daughters, Hallie and Kate and a son, Luke.

THE CHRIS CREIGHTON FILE

Name: [Chris Creighton](#)

College: Kenyon College (Graduated in 1991 - bachelor's degree)

Concordia (Ill.) University (Graduated in 2003 - master's degree)

Family: Wife: Heather Children: Hallie, Kate, Luke

COACHING EXPERIENCE

YEAR	SCHOOL	POSITION	RECORD-HIGHLIGHTS
2013	Drake University	Head Coach	6-5, 5-3 PFL
2012	Drake University	Head Coach	8-3, 7-1 PFL co-champions
2011	Drake University	Head Coach	9-2, 7-1 PFL co-champions
2010	Drake University	Head Coach	7-4, 6-2 PFL
2009	Drake University	Head Coach	8-3, 6-2 PFL
2008	Drake University	Head Coach	6-5, 4-4 PFL
2007	Wabash College	Head Coach	11-2, NCAA Div. III playoffs, conference title
2006	Wabash College	Head Coach	8-2, conference title
2005	Wabash College	Head Coach	11-1, NCAA Div. III playoffs, conference title
2004	Wabash College	Head Coach	6-4
2003	Wabash College	Head Coach	7-3
2002	Wabash College	Head Coach	12-1, NCAA Div. III playoffs, conference title
2001	Wabash College	Head Coach	8-2
2000	Ottawa (Kan.) University	Head Coach	9-2, NAIA playoffs, conference title

1999	Ottawa (Kan.) University	Head Coach	6-3
1998	Ottawa (Kan.) University	Head Coach	8-2
1997	Ottawa (Kan.) University	Head Coach	9-2
1993-96	Manchester (Ind.) College	Asst. Coach/OC	
1993	Limhamns Griffins	Head Coach/QB's	
1991-92	Concordia (Ill. University)	Asst. Coach/OC	

CAREER RECORD 139-46 (.764 winning percentage)

2008-13 at Drake 44-22 (.667 winning percentage)

2001-07 at Wabash 63-15 (.807 winning percentage)

1997-2007 at Ottawa 32-9 (.780 winning percentage)