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Men's Swimming and Diving Aims to Defend Championship Title

Eagles travel to Buffalo for conference meet



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YPSILANTI, Mich. (EMUEagles.com) — After yet another undefeated Mid-American Conference dual season, extending its winning streak to 66, dating back to the 1997-98 season, the Eastern Michigan University men's swimming and diving team is ready to defend its 2013 MAC Championship title. The Eagles will trek to Buffalo, N.Y. for the 2014 MAC Swimming and Diving Championships, March 6-8.

The following is a summary of the teams the Green and White will face in Buffalo, based on top performers from last year as well as swimmers who rank in the top-10 performances for the conference in the 2013-14 season.

EASTERN MICHIGAN: The Eagles undoubtedly enter the 2014 Mid-American Conference Swimming and Diving Championships with a large target on their back, having won 12 of the last 14 conference meets. Since Head Coach [Peter Linn](#) took the helm in the 1988-89 season, the Green and White has taken 21 championship titles and finished runner-up in the other four meets under Linn's tenure. The squad also boasts a laudable 66-MAC dual winning streak, dating back to the 1997-98 campaign. Returning to this year's roster are thirteen athletes that placed in the top-eight at the 2013 MAC Championships, including five All-MAC selections and three MAC champions.

Looking to defend two titles in the breaststroke events will be [Mike Fisher \(Saline, Mich.-Saline\)](#), who set a championship record of 1:57.54 in the 200 breast. This season, Fisher holds the seventh-fastest time in the

conference in the 100 breast (56.63) and the eighth-best time (2:04.75) in the 200. Sophomore [Chris Hodges \(Lincolnshire, Ill.-Stevenson\)](#) is another top competitor in the breaststroke races with the fifth-best marks in both the 100 and 200. Also aiming to reprise a championship title in individual events are [Brian Moore \(Anthem, Ariz.-Boulder Creek\)](#) and [Krzysztof Gilski \(Dywity, Poland-Adam Mickiewicz State Secondary\)](#). Moore took the 200 free in 1:36.45, just .08 seconds ahead of Buffalo's Matt Hogan. This season, Moore has swum a season-best time of 1:39.64 to hold the fifth spot in conference standings. Gilski won the 200 fly in 1:47.60, nearly one second ahead of Buffalo's Eric Culver. The sophomore has not been far off his mark this season, holding the third-fastest time in the conference after a 1:48.86 performance.

The Green and White has seen success across the board in conference top-10 performance rankings. In the freestyle sprints, the Eagles are led by [Dexter Foos \(Fremont, Ohio-Fremont-Ross\)](#) and [Erik Gissen \(Kalrstad, Sweden-Alvkullgymnasiet\)](#) with season-bests of 20.74 and 20.76 in the 50 free, respectively. Foos finished second in the event at last year's conference meet, and fellow senior [Gus Everson \(Sandusky, Ohio-Sandusky\)](#) will also look to place in the extremely competitive field. Foos also stands in the top portion of the conference in the 100 free, paced by Moore and [Andrew Henry \(Garner, N.C.-West Johnston\)](#) with 45.11 and 45.23 finishes. Henry has also laid claim to the second-best time of the season in the 200 free, finishing in 1:38.38. The Eagles are also favored to do well in the distance freestyles. With numerous swimmers upon which the squad could potentially rely, Gilski, Henry, [Franco Petrone \(Etobicoke, Ontario-Silverthorne Collegiate Institute\)](#) and newcomer [Kyle Lichtenberg \(Clarkston, Mich.\)](#) hold spots in the top-10 between the 500, 1000, and 1650 freestyles. Last season, Petrone earned a podium finish in the 1650 when he claimed third in the event, while Moore was the top finisher for the Eagles in the 500 with a third-place finish.

Joining Gilski on the leaderboards for the butterfly events is senior [Tom Coates \(Melbourne, Australia-St. Kevins College\)](#). Coates turned in the seventh and sixth-best performances in the conference in the 100 and 200 fly at the Eagles' regular season-capping appearance, the Michigan First Chance Meet, Feb. 22-23. The senior touched in at 49.45 in the 100 fly and 1:50.27 in the 200 fly to earn his spot among the top swimmers in the league. Hoping to replace the loss of [Jacob Hanson](#) as the team's primary backstroke competitor, freshman [Cole Bateman \(Hutchinson, Minn.-Hutchinson\)](#) has made great strides in his freshman campaign, holding the second-best time in the conference in the 200 back at 1:49.04 and the seventh time in the 100 back after turning in a 50.13 split in a 400 medley relay effort. Hodges also holds the sixth-best time in the 200 IM (1:52.77) and is joined by freshman [Ethan McNally \(Loveland, Colo.-Loveland\)](#), who claimed the ninth-fastest mark in the 400 IM with a 4:03.15 performance at the Michigan First Chance Meet.

The Eagles hold the second-best relay times of the 2013-14 season in the 400 medley, 200 free, 400 free, and 800 free relays, not far behind leading team Missouri State in each event. The squad has played around with its lineup, but fall back on a mixture of Gissen, Foos, Everson, Moore, and Henry as integral parts of each relay team.

The Eagles come into the conference meet with a 7-1 record (3-0 MAC), dropping their only dual meet to Northwestern University, Oct. 18, 2013.

BALL STATE: The Cardinals return five-of-seven swimmers that placed in the upper-eight finishes at last year's conference meet with just one athlete placing in the top-three, as Joe Morris took second in the 200 breast behind a record-breaking performance from [Mike Fisher](#). However, the senior has been silent for this season, making no appearances on the top times for the MAC in the breaststroke events.

BSU has struggled placing any swimmers in the top-10 among conference standings, as no Cardinal appears on the individual lists of top times. The Cardinals also sit in the last spots in the 200 free, 400 free, 200 medley, and 400

medley relays.

Ball State comes into the MAC Championships with a 3-6 (0-5 MAC) record. When the Eagles last faced the Cardinals, they took a 163-115 advantage over BSU, Jan. 25 in Jones Natatorium.

BUFFALO: After a third-place team performance at the 2013 MAC Championships, the Bulls return just under half of their returning top scorers. Buffalo also suffers the loss of five MAC Champions, returning just one in senior Mike Dugan, who took the 50 free and 100 fly while competing in the winning 200 free, 200 medley, and 400 free relays. This season, Dugan sits at third in the 50 free at 20.57 and fifth in the 100 fly (49.19), barely trailing [Krzysztof Gilski](#) in conference standings. He could also be a top competitor in the 100 back, as he holds the fourth-best time of 49.50.

Newcomer Eric Jensen will look to compete in the 200 free, as he holds the seventh spot in the charts with a season-best time of 1:39.85. Senior Dan O'Connor has stepped up his pace in the distance events, holding the top times in the 1000 (9:17.11) and 1650 free (15:17.19), while holding the third-fastest time in the 500 free (4:27.47). The Bulls boast the most swimmers in the top-10 in the 200 fly, as fifth-place senior Eric Culver (1:50.11), along with underclassmen Matt Bitara (1:50.49), Bill Patrum (1:51.29), and Charles Barry (1:51.69) could all make an impact in scoring for the squad. Barry has been another Bull riding a strong freshman campaign, as he has the fourth spot in the 200 back at 1:49.28. While unrepresented in the 100 breast among the top-10 performers, Buffalo has three swimmers in the 200 breast that stand among the league's best. O'Connor, the leader in the distance free events, makes an appearance in the standings (2:05.84), along with John Nord (2:04.36) and Scott Huang (2:04.75).

Buffalo has a strong chance of scoring well in the 400 IM, as O'Connor holds the second-best time at 3:55.78, and is followed by Bill Caffee (3:59.01), Barry (3:59.01), and Patrum (4:00.72). In the relays, the Bulls sit relatively in the middle of the conference pack, holding the third-best time in the 200 medley, the fourth in the 200 free, 400 free, and 800 free, and the fifth spot in the 400 medley relay. Antonio Lanzi and Tommy Steele have appeared in the best performances of the season in the freestyle relays, accompanied in some variation by Dugan, Jensen, or O'Connor.

The Bulls boast a 6-2 record, and are 2-1 in conference competition. When Buffalo came to Ypsilanti, Jan. 18, they were handed a 195-105 setback at the hands of the Green and White.

EVANSVILLE: The Purple Aces have the most room for improvement out of any team at the MAC Championships after placing seventh at last year's meet. Evansville returns eight swimmers that placed in the top-eight last year while losing just three, but no member of the squad was able to notch a finish higher than fifth place.

Evansville has just one swimmer in the top-10 performances for the year in the freestyle events, as junior Ashton Bishop has edged his way into the standings in the 50 free behind a season-best 20.83 finish. The Purple Aces remain largely unrepresented in the individual events, placing just sophomore Troy Burger in the charts for the breaststroke events upon notching a 56.52 in the 100 breast and 2:03.59 in the 200 breast for the fourth and sixth-fastest times in the league, respectively. The team also suffers in the relays, holding the next-to-last spot in every race except the 800 free relay, in which it holds the bottom position. The squad has put in a myriad of swimmers in each relay, but seems to put Bishop, Phil Stevenson, and Ethan O'Rourke in as primary staples.

Evansville comes into the conference meet with a 2-5 (1-4 MAC) record. The Purple Aces did not clash with the Eagles this season, and furthermore have never met up with the Green and White in dual action in EMU swimming's 49-year history.

MIAMI: The RedHawks return nine athletes that made top-eight appearances while losing four swimmers from the roster. Though Miami does not have any swimmers that are looking to reprise an individual top-four finish, six team members from the fourth-place 200 medley and 800 free relays are on the current roster in Evan Bader, Joe Baumgartner, Michael Cavanaugh, Chris Dieter, Andy Kilkenny, and Davis Staley. Junior swimmer Baumgartner, who was a vital part of last year's meet with seven top-eight finishes to his name has appeared on all of the RedHawks' fastest freestyle relay teams this season. In the 200 free, he was accompanied by Cavanaugh, Lucas Brock, and Dan Nemeth to notch the fifth-fastest time in the conference. Nemeth returned for the 400 free relay along with Dieter and Jacob Prodoehl as the team turned in another fifth-best performance. The 800 free relay has been the strongest freestyle quartet for the team, with a third-best turnout from Baumgartner, Dieter, Kilkenny, and Grant Stafford. In the medley relays, MU stands at fourth in the 200 and third in the 400 medley relay, composed of Bader, Prodoehl, Nemeth, Stafford, or Heshan Unamboowe.

In the freestyle events, Nemeth and Baumgartner appear on the 50 free standings, with Nemeth pacing his junior counterpart by .10 seconds with a 20.61 fourth-place spot. Baumgartner is the sole RedHawk representative in the 100 free, holding down the sixth spot at 45.16, and Dieter nudged his way into the 10th-fastest performance in the 200 free with a 1:40.57 mark. Miami does not have a clear frontrunner in the distance events, as senior Sean Minderlein has put out the fastest time on the team in the 1000 free at 9:37.13, good for eighth, while rookie Bryan McNamara holds the 10th spot in the 1650 free at 16:11.26. Stafford is the top butterflyer for the squad, holding the MAC standard for the season in the 200 fly behind a 1:48.47 mark while claiming the ninth-fastest time in the 100 fly at 49.75. In the backstroke events, the team should look to Sean Neri and Staley, who sit at eighth and 10th, respectively, in the 200 back. Sophomore Evan Bader has made a name for himself in conference standings in the breaststroke events after taking eighth in last year's 100 breast competition. Bader holds the second-best time in the 100 for the season at 55.57, and has notched a time of 2:02.57 in the 200 breast to lock down the fourth spot on the list. The RedHawks have just one swimmer in top standings in the individual medley, as Cavanaugh boasts the eighth-fastest time in the 200 IM at 1:53.32.

Miami comes into this year's MAC Championships with a 5-3 dual record, going 2-2 in conference competition. This season, the RedHawks hosted the Eagles in the final conference dual of the 2013-14 campaign, in which Eastern claimed a 175-125 victory to extend their current MAC winning streak to 66 conference duals.

MISSOURI STATE: The Missouri State Bears return all members of the squad that placed in the top-eight at last year's MAC Championship, as 16 swimmers and one diver will look to compete against the Eagles after dropping the championship title by just six points. Ten different athletes notched at least one top-four finish in the 2013 meet, and five claimed MAC Champion status. Miguel Davila was the only individual champion, taking the 1650 free. This year, the sophomore Davila stands at second in conference standings in the event, just three seconds behind Buffalo's Dan O'Connor. The Bears picked up one more victory in the 800 free relay, in which Uvis Kalnins, Vitalii Baryshok, Caleb Scheuermann, and Isaac McKnight clinched the winning time. This year, Kalnins and Baryshok have been a vital part of all three freestyle relay races along with junior Paul Le, who is making a strong candidacy for Most Outstanding Swimmer. Le, the current school record holder in the 50 free, 100 back, 200 back, and 200 IM, tops the MAC standings in all four events as well as the 100 fly. The junior controls the standings in the 200 back by a considerable margin of over five seconds after a 1:43.42 performance. Le also had a season-best 20.22 in the 50 free, 48.81 in the 100 fly, 47.09 in the 100 back, and holds a .10-second edge on teammate Kalnins for the top spot in the 200 IM (1:47.41). Kalnins could also do some considerable damage in scoring, as the school record holder in the 500 free and 400 IM has the potential to aid the team considerably in the endurance events. Baryshok, Le, and Kalnins have been joined by Isaac Springer in the medley relays, with the sophomore taking his place in the breaststroke slot. Springer also holds the top spot in both breaststroke events, turning in the fastest conference

season times of 54.61 in the 100 breast and 1:58.44 in the 200 breast. The Missouri State relay teams lead the conference for every race.

In addition to the athletes that pace the conference in multiple categories, the Bears have numerous other top-notch swimmers that stand in the top-10 of the league's best times. In the butterfly events, Matthew Wilson (48.98), Preston Selby (49.57), Michal Bulak (50.19), and Baryshok (49.36) have turned in top finishes in the 100 fly, while Bulak claims the final spot in the 200 fly (1:51.70). The team is equally stacked in backstroke; the 100 back standings feature Uri Garanito (49.48), Jack Snow (49.77), Selby (49.92), and Wilson (50.29), while the 200 back top times include Brandon Weissman (1:49.07), Garanito (1:49.30), and Snow (1:49.44). In the 100 breast, Springer is followed by Aaron Dennis (56.54), Uldis Tazans (56.67), Chris Carpenter (56.69), and Kalnins (56.87), while the 200 breast charts feature just Springer with Kalnins in the third-place spot at 2:01.72. Baryshok and Kalnins could be largely relied upon in the freestyle sprints, while Scheuermann and freshman Naresh Naik could step in along side Davila to be major point winners. The Bears also boast a deep field in the individual medleys, as Le, Kalnins, Carpenter, and Colin Hill have top times in the 200 IM while Kalnins, Davila, Wesimann, Naik, and Hill lead the team in the 400 IM.

The Bears enter the MAC meet with a 10-3 record (2-0 MAC), and have never met with the Eagles in a dual meet.

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS: The Salukis return nine swimmers and one diver that placed in the top-eight of the field at the 2013 MAC Championships while losing just two athletes to graduation. After a strong freshman campaign in which he was the only member of the SIU squad to place in the top-three in individual events, Till Pallmann will look to retain his crown in the 500 free as well as keep top status in the conference in the 100 and 200 free. Pallmann currently boasts the top time in the 200 free by a margin of over one second over EMU's [Andrew Henry](#) (1:37.10), while his 100 free time of 44.49 beats out the international pair of Missouri State's Vitalii Baryshok and Uvis Kalnins. The German product also has the edge over a Bear in the 500 free, besting Miguel Davila by nearly a second in the 500 free (4:26.53). SIU has a handful of swimmers in the top rankings in the freestyle sprints, as Pallman holds the second-best time in the 50 free (20.50), while freshman Dusan Vukobrat (20.70) holds the fifth spot. Vukobrat also has the eighth-fastest time in the 100 free (45.30) and the sixth-best in the 200 free (1:39.78), while Calvin Kolar and Oleg Rabota earn their spots on the respective charts.

Vukobrat has also swum his way into top standings in the 100 fly, claiming the third spot behind a pair of Missouri State swimmers at 49.15, while Pallmann is the fourth-fastest in the 200 fly with a 1:49.02 mark. Pallmann has also shown strength in the 100 back, holding the second-best season time at 48.47, followed by Rabota (50.28), who leads the team in the 200 back courtesy of a season-best mark of 1:50.72. Leading the team in the breaststroke events is Kolar, as the junior boasts the third-fastest time in the conference in the 100 breast (56.19) and the second-best in the 200 breast (2:01.64).

The Salukis hold the third spots in the 200 free and 400 free relays, primarily composed of Pallmann and Vukobrat with input from Rabota and Esteavo Andrade. Kolar, Vukobrat, and Pallmann have also been on the season-best 200 and 400 medley relay teams, the former of which holds the second-best finish of the season in the MAC.

Southern Illinois holds a 4-2 record coming into the MAC Championships, going 2-1 in conference matchups. The Salukis did not face EMU this season; in fact, the two teams have only met up one time in the Eagles' 49-year history, when the Green and White took a 59-54 decision during the 1993-94 season.