1-8-2014

Men's Basketball: Men's Basketball Opens Up MAC Play at Bowling Green January

Eastern Michigan University

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Recommended Citation
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YPSILANTI, Mich. (EMUEagles.com) -- The Eastern Michigan University men's basketball team will open Mid-American Conference play Wednesday, Jan. 8, when it travels south to Bowling Green State University. It will be the second straight season that Eagles and Falcons will square off in the Stroh Center. This battle of the birds is scheduled for 7 p.m. Wednesday evening in Bowling Green, Ohio.

READY FOR MAC PLAY: After completing the non-conference portion of the 2013-14 schedule, Eastern Michigan is on the road for three of its first four conference contests. EMU first will take on the Falcons of Bowling Green Wednesday, Jan. 8, before heading to upstate New York, Jan. 11, for a matchup with Buffalo. EMU then returns home Tuesday, Jan. 14, for its first televised home game with cross-state rival Western Michigan before hitting the road again. Following the game with WMU, the Eagles make the short jaunt north to Central Michigan for its second-straight in-state rivalry game Saturday, Jan. 18, at McGuirk Arena.
FINDING THE GAME AT HOME: The Eagles' contest with the Falcons will hit the airwaves of 89.1 FM (WEMU). In addition to the WEMU broadcast, the game will be streamed live on a streaming service provided by Bowling Green. To access the stream, head to BGSUFalcons.com.

Veteran "Voice of the Eagles" Chad Bush will serve as EMU's play-by-play announcer for the WEMU broadcast, while Sean Hostetter will handle the analyst duties for the Wednesday evening contest at the Stroh Center.

ALL-TIME AGAINST THE FALCONS: The Eagles are behind in the series with Bowling Green. Eastern trails by a tally of 38-47, while the Falcons own that cushy nine game lead in the history of these programs. EMU fell, 46-44, in its most recent contest with BGSU in Bowling Green, Ohio when Jordan Crawford knocked down a three-pointer with just six seconds on the clock to give the Falcons the lead down the stretch.

Derek Thompson led the Eagles in scoring with 11 points off the bench, all in the second half. Da'Shonte Riley added seven points and 10 rebounds while Jamell Harris added six points and 11 boards. Eastern (7-9, 0-2 MAC) shot 15-of-32 for a 28.8 shooting percentage on the evening, going 5-of-20 from the floor in the second half. The Eagles did find success at the foul line, making 10-of-12 free throws.

MURPHY VERSUS THE MAC: Third-year Head Men's Basketball Coach Rob Murphy holds an even 16-16 record against the Mid-American Conference heading into 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 divisions, going 12-8, while they are just 4-8 against the East Division, which, Murphy looks to improve during the 2013-14 season.

GIVE ME SOME MORE MACtion: Heading into the 2013-14 season, it was announced that the Mid-American Conference would be expanding its regular season. Instead of the previous 16-game schedule, the member institutions will now play an 18-game conference slate. In order to fill those extra two games, each team will another pair of cross-divisional contests. EMU's two extra games will be filled by Bowling Green and the 2013 MAC Tournament Champion, Akron.

A GOOD START: After going 8-5 in non-conference action while playing one of the toughest schedules that Eastern has seen in its history, the Green and White are heading into Mid-American Conference play with its most wins since the 2009-10 season when they won eight non-conference tilts. That team finished the non-conference schedule with an 8-6 record, while going 17-15 on the season and 8-8 in MAC play.
**FIRST TIME SINCE 11-12:** The EMU squad is looking to open MAC play with a win for the first time since Jan. 7, 2012, when the Eagles defeated Northern Illinois on the road.

**RILEY PULLS DOWN A CAREER HIGH:** Senior center Da'Shonte Riley commanded the glass Saturday, Jan. 4, against the Rochester Warriors. Riley led all-rebounders with 14, setting a new career standard for the seven-footer. His previous best was 13 rebounds which he recorded twice last season.

**AT THE TOP OF THE MAC:** The Eagles are near the top of the esteemed Mid-American Conference in multiple categories this season. EMU posts the best field goal percentage defense (37.7 percent) and most blocked shots (6.5 bpg). EMU ranks second in steals (8.5 spg) and three-point field goal percentage defense (29.4 percent), while ranking third in turnover margin (+3.5) and fourth scoring defense (67.1 ppg).

Individually, Da'Shonte Riley is tied for the lead in blocks, averaging 3.1 per contest, while Glenn Bryant is fourth, turning away 2.1 per game. Karrington Ward's 14.2 points per game is tied for the ninth-best in the MAC, and Bryant is hitting 61.3 percent of his shots which is the second highest percentage in the conference. Additionally, Mike Talley has an assist/turnover ratio of 2.3, which is the second-best in the MAC.

**COMFY ON ANY FLOOR:** Detroit, Mich. native Glenn Bryant has shown that he can play at any gym across the country throughout his career. The senior is averaging 11.6 points away from Ypsilanti this season, while holding a 69.7 percent field goal percentage. Conversely, during home games the 6-foot-8 forward posts 9.6 points per contest, while knocking down 53.3 percent of his field goal attempts.

**NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION:** After recording a 7-5 record during the 2013 portion of this season's schedule, Head Coach Rob Murphy hopes to post a much better record in the month of January than he did in the 2012-13 campaign. Last season's squad managed just a 3-5 record during the first month of the season last year. He is off to a 1-0 start after topping Rochester, 92-54, on Jan. 4.

**65 OR BUST:** The Eagles seem to have found a magic number that they need to strive for this season. The Eagles are 8-0 when they score 65-or-more points this season. In their five losses they have not been able to eclipse that mark. Eastern scored 63 versus Kentucky, 57 in the setback to UMass, 64 in the game with Purdue, 59 in their loss to Duke and a season-low 48 points in a setback at Syracuse.

**ON THE ROAD THIS YEAR:** Eastern Michigan has really struggled in games on the road this season. Overall, the Eagles are 1-4 away from Ypsilanti and are averaging just 63.0 points per
Individually, we have seen a dropoff in offensive production in EMU's two top-scorers away from home. Both Karrington Ward and Raven Lee average over 15 points per game inside the Convocation Center. However, when on the road, Ward notches just 11.6 points per contest, while Lee scores 11 points per tilt.

**A BLOCK A DAY:** Senior center Da'Shonte Riley has played in 66 career games for the Green and White. During that time, he has accumulated 136 blocks, which ranks as the third-most in EMU history. In 66 games, the Detroit, Mich. native has swatted at least one shot in all but 17 contests. This season, he has recorded a block in all but three games, while he missed out in eight games last season and six during the 2011-12 season. Overall, he has managed to stuff the opponent at least once in 74.2 percent of the games he has appeared in for EMU.

**HAPPY AT HOME:** The Eagles have enjoyed much success within the friendly confines of the Convocation Center this season. With a 7-1 record, EMU has shot 48.6 percent from the floor, while hitting 39.6 percent of its shots from three-point land. Eastern is scoring 76.5 points per contest, while holding its opponents to 59.8 points per game.

Under Head Coach Rob Murphy, the EMU basketball team has been comfortable opening up the season inside the friendly confines of the Convocation Center. Throughout the past three seasons since Murphy has taken over the EMU program, he holds a 29-10 record inside the Convocation Center.

**SEND IN THE SWAT TEAM:** Eastern Michigan's defensive prowess is what has allowed the team to be successful the last few years. That stealthy defense includes their shot blocking ability. To this point, EMU has blocked 85 shots and they average 6.5 per contest which is tied for the 13th-best in the country. Da'Shonte Riley has led that defensive block party. The senior who transferred from Syracuse just two seasons ago has racked up 40 blocks already this season. The Detroit, Mich. native is also earning his spot in the EMU record books. The seven-footer has blocked 136 shots in his career, good for the third-most in Eastern Michigan history. He is 31 shy of Jamell Harris, while he trails the all-time leader Theron Wilson by a wide margin. Wilson finished his career with 257 rejections. Riley, however, has only played just over one and a half seasons for the Green and White, while Wilson appeared on the EMU roster for four seasons (1992-96). Riley tied in the No. 17 spot in the country with his 3.1 per game this season.

Glenn Bryant has been no slouch at turning away the opposition. He is averaging 2.1 blocks per contest, good enough to be tied for the 64th-most in the nation. His 69 career blocks have him
tied with Calvin Warner as the ninth-best shot blocker in EMU history.

**ROAD WOES:** Since Rob Murphy took over as the head coach of the Eagles, the team has struggled on the road. Overall, Murphy's teams are 8-29 on the road in his first three seasons. In non-conference play, the Green and White holds a 3-18 record away from the Convocation Center.

**A WIN ON THE ROAD:** Wins on the road are hard to come by at the NCAA Division I ranks. The Eagles did just that Saturday, Dec. 21, with their victory at Oakland. It was EMU's first road win of the year and the first time it defeated Oakland at the O'rena since Nov. 14, 2009.

**CHECK THE SPECIALTY STATS:** The Eagles are averaging 29.5 points per game in the paint, 26.0 points off the bench, 18.1 points per game off turnovers, 10.3 second-chance points and 11.3 fast break points per game.

**BENCH WORK:** The Eagles' bench is providing 26.0 points per game through the first 13 contests. Those 26.0 points per game account for 36.4 percent of the Green and White's scoring this season.

**DEEP GREEN SEA:** Head Coach Rob Murphy has the luxury of being "too deep". Murphy has 10 players that he feels could start on any given day for the Green and White. So far this season, the Detroit, Mich. native has played 10 different student-athletes for at least 10 minutes per game, including eight that have seen at least 14 minutes of action per contest.

**DEFYING MURPHY'S LAW:** Although defense has been Head Coach Rob Murphy's philosophy since he stepped foot on the campus of Eastern Michigan, the 2013-14 basketball team seems to be showing the third-year head coach that it might be able to win games on the offensive side of the ball as well. Since coming to Ypsilanti, Murphy's squads have averaged 53.2 and 56.6 points per game, respectively. On the other side of the ball, Murphy's Eagles have allowed just 58.7 and 59.1 points per contest in those two seasons. Throughout this season, the Eagles are averaging 71.3 points on the offensive side, while allowing just 66.1 points on the defensive side. It seems as though these Eagles are embracing the defensive philosophy while exploding on the other side of the court as well.