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Wrestling Travels to 51st Annual Midlands Championships

Germaine looks to continue winning ways in Evanston

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YPSILANTI, Mich. (EMUeagles.com) -- The Eastern Michigan University wrestling squad heads to its third open of the 2013-14 season as it travels to Evanston, Ill. to compete in the 51st Ken Kraft Midlands Championships for the fourth consecutive year, Sunday, Dec. 29 - Monday, Dec. 30. The tournament will be the last event of the 2013 calendar year for the squad.

The event kicks off Sunday, Dec. 29 at 9:30 a.m. with the second session starting at 7 p.m. Monday, Dec. 30 will see the third session action as well as the semifinals, consolation matches and seventh-place matches all starting at noon.

This Year in Evanston: The annual tournament features many of the top programs in the country. This season's field includes Big Ten competition Indiana, Ohio State, Purdue, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan and Wisconsin. The 51st installment of the championships will feature more than 40 schools with national champions and national powers from Division I, II, III and NAIA programs.

Northwestern's Lee Munster and Mike McMullan return to compete in this season's Midlands as Munster was the 2011 champion and McMullan was a 2012 semifinalist. The Wildcats also have No. 4 ranked Jason Tsirtsis coming back who will be tough competition at 149 lbs.

The Eagles have participated in the Midland Championships for three consecutive seasons and four times
since Derek DelPorto took over as head coach. The Green and White's best score came in the 2011-12 campaign when EMU earned 26.5 points to come in 23rd out of 43 teams. Eastern also finished 23rd in the 2008-09 season, needing only 21.5 points. Last season, DelPorto and his squad came in 30th out of 48 teams and nabbed 14.5 points in the 50th installment of the championships.

EASTERN'S HISTORY AT MIDLANDS: Ryan-Welsh arena has proven to be a winning arena for redshirt-senior Jared Germaine. The Saginaw, Mich. native boasts an 8-4 overall record in his two years competing, including a seventh-place finish in the 2011-12 season. Germaine posted a 4-2 finish in 2011 as he earned two-straight decisions over Stanford's Evan Silver and then-No. 9 Garrett Frey of Princeton. Germaine capped off his first Midlands with a narrow 5-4 decision over then-No. 5 Trent Sprengle of North Dakota State University in the seventh-place match for the Eagles. Last season, Germaine fell in the opening round before winning four-straight in the consolation bracket. Germaine was unable to clinch the win he needed in the quarterfinals of the consolation bracket as he fell to then-No. 1 Anthony Zanetta of Pitt.

Redshirt-senior Phillip Joseph has also seen success at Midlands as he posted a 4-2 record at the 2011 edition of the tournament. The Lapeer, Mich. native had three decisions and one major decision, but was unable to nab the win he needed in his final match to grab a top-eight finish.

EAGLES DOWN COMETS: Eastern picked up its third-consecutive dual win and improved to 2-0 at home as it took down Olivet, 23-9, Tuesday, Dec. 17, at Bowen Field House. The win allowed the Eagles to tie its entire win total from the 2012-13 season as EMU went 7-13 on the season. The Green and White need just four more dual wins to have its first winning season since the 2011-12 campaign.

After falling in the third bout of the night the Eagles went on to win five-straight en route to its 23-9 victory over the Comets. Redshirt-senior Brandon Zeerip and "true" freshman Austin Geerlings allowed EMU to get out to a 7-0 lead as Zeerip earned the 14-6 major decision and Geerlings picked up his second dual victory of the year as many duals with a 10-4 decision.

The Green and White used two shutouts in the final seven bouts of the night to earn its seventh series victory over Olivet and improve to a perfect 7-0 record against the in-state competitor.

THREE EAGLES RANKED IN MAC DECEMBER POLLS: Three EMU redshirt-seniors are currently ranked in the Mid-American Conference December Polls as Jared Germaine (125 lbs.) and Nick Whitenburg (194 lbs.) rank third in their respective weight classes and Phillip Joseph ranks fourth at 184 lbs.

Germaine boasts a perfect 6-0 record for the Eagles at the 125 lb. weight class and has yet to be beaten in his final season, while Whitenburg holds a 4-2 record, falling only to Drexel's Brandon Palik and Michigan State's Nick McDiarmid. Phillip Joseph has proven to be a steady competitor after moving up to 184 lbs. in his senior season as he holds a 9-2 overall record and a 6-1 dual record. The Lapeer, Mich. native clinched the deciding pin over Stanford to allow the Eagles to beat the then-No. 23 Cardinal 18-16 at the Convocation Center, Nov. 24.

OUTSCORING THE OPPOSITION: The Eagles are currently outscoring their opponents 204-96 on the young season as they have only allowed four teams to score in the double-digits through their first six duals. The Green and White's 204 team points are the best any team since the 2005-06 season has put up through its first eight duals. The 2011-12 team nabbed 202 points through eight duals with a 49-3 win over Sacred Heart, Nov. 26, 2011.

EMU dominated its first four opponents at the EMU Duals as it dropped only seven of its 40 bouts on the day, while averaging two pins per dual with eight total, including five in its first dual against Tiffin. The Green and White suffered its first loss of the season at Michigan State, but kept the Spartans to only one pin and six decisions, keeping the score under 30.

The Eagles came up with close wins over Stanford and Old Dominion, using a Phillip Joseph pin against the Cardinal and a Khodor Hoballah decision against the Monarchs. Eastern continued its dominating ways over Olivet as it defeated the Comets 23-9, which allowed EMU to keep its opponent point total under 100.
TAKEING DOWN RANKED OPPONENTS: The Green and White has taken down two ranked opponents in two-straight duals as the Eagles defeated No. 23 Stanford, 18-16 in the Convocation Center before traveling to Norfolk, Va. and securing a 21-19 victory over No. 24 Old Dominion, Dec. 6. Since EMU defeated both teams, the Cardinal has moved up as high as No. 18 in the NCAA rankings, while the Monarchs dropped out of Wrestlingreport.com's top-25. The wins mark the first time in Eagle history that Eastern has defeated two ranked teams in a season. Prior to beating Stanford and Old Dominion, EMU last beat a ranked opponent in the 2012-13 campaign when it defeated then-No. 24 North Dakota State, 18-17, Nov. 24, 2012.

Individually, seven wrestlers have taken on ranked opponents as the team posts a 2-9 record this season against ranked opposition. Vincent Pizzuto and Nicholas Barber each have 1-1 records against ranked opponents as Pizzuto defeated No. 19 Sam Sherlock of Clarion in a 10-1 major decision before falling to Stanford's No. 3 Ryan Mango, 12-5. Barber first earned a 10-5 decision over Clarion's No. 31 Tyler Bedeayon before suffering a fall in 2:44 to No. 12 Chris Mecate of Old Dominion.

DELPORTO CAPTURES 100th CAREER VICTORY: Head Coach Derek DelPorto clinched his 100th career victory as a head coach when the Eagles grabbed a 21-19 victory over Old Dominion. The deciding win over the preseason No. 2 team in the MAC came in the final bout as the Eagles trailed by one heading into the heavyweight division.

The Erie, Pa. native posts a 101-90-2 all-time record since he began coaching at Slippery Rock prior to coming to Eastern Michigan in 2006.

DELPORTO NEARING ALL-TIME EMU COACHING RECORD: Head Coach Derek DelPorto currently holds a 79-69-2 record at EMU, which is one win shy of tying former head coach John Eisley. While at Eastern, Eisley posted an 80-74-4 record in his 12-year tenure. If DelPorto picks up just two more wins this season, he will take the all-time wins record in just eight seasons at the helm.

GERMAINE REMAINS PERFECT: Redshirt-senior Jared Germaine has come out strong in his final season as an Eagle. The Saginaw, Mich. native boasts a perfect 6-0 overall and dual record on the season as he has notched big wins in each of his bouts.

Germaine posted two decisions and a major decision at the EMU Duals before taking a 13-7 decision over Michigan State’s Hermilo Esquivel and a 9-3 decision over Stanford’s Tommy Pawelski.

Germaine's sixth win of the season got the Green and White off to a quick 3-0 lead over Old Dominion as he captured a 4-2 decision over Jerome Robinson in the opening bout. Robinson took an early 2-0 lead with a takedown in the first period before Germaine grabbed an escape to come within one. Germaine grabbed his first takedown in the second period to take a 4-2 lead. Neither wrestler was able to score in the final period as Germaine remained undefeated and improved to 6-0 on the season.

COVERAGE OF MIDLANDS: Fans can follow the team on www.EMUEagles.com and Twitter (@EMUWrestling). Fans can join in on the conversation by using #FlyingHigher. The championships will be on BTN, Monday, Dec. 30 at 8 p.m.

UP NEXT ON THE MAT?: The Eagles kick off the 2014 year as they play host to Northern Iowa in its second Mid-American Conference dual of the 2013-14 campaign. The Green and White will host the Panthers at the Convocation Center with the dual set to start at 1 p.m.