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Eastern Michigan University

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Zeerip Leads Eagles on Day One of Midlands

Brandon Zeerip is the lone Eagle competing on day two of Midlands

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EVANSTON, Ill. (EMUEagles.com) – The Eastern Michigan University wrestling team completed day one of the 51st Ken Kraft Midlands Championships, Sunday, Dec. 29 at Ryan-Welsh Arena on the campus of Northwestern University.

The Green and White sit in 15th out of 47 teams on the conclusion of day one as it has just redshirt-senior Brandon Zeerip (Fremont, Mich.-Hesperia) remaining in the tournament. The Eagles earned 21 points on day one as Iowa leads the field with 112 points and nine wrestlers remaining in the championship bracket. Eastern is just 5.5 points shy of its best showing in the 2011-12 campaign when the Eagles earned 26.5 team points.

Zeerip started off the day strong for EMU as he went 3-0 with two decisions and one major decision to remain in the championship bracket after the conclusion of the first session. The Fremont, Mich. native was unable to grab a win in his first bout in the second session, sending him into the wrestleback bracket to kick off day two of the tournament. Zeerip will take on Isaiah Martinez, as he is the lone Eagle remaining in the tournament for Eastern Michigan.

Eastern saw other bright spots on the day as Jacob Davis (North Ridgeville, Ohio-St. Edward) pinned Ben Cox of Wisconsin in 2:11 and Phillip Joseph (Lapeer, Mich.-Lapeer East) nabbed a pin in 6:32 over Luther's Jayden Devilbiss.
Although unable to clinch the win he needed to move on to day two of the tournament, redshirt-senior Khodor Hoballah (Dearborn, Mich.-Dearborn) walked away with a winning record in Evanston as he went 3-2 on the day with one major decision.

“This is a very tough tournament and if you aren’t ready to fight from start to finish you will lose,” said Head Coach Derek DelPorto. “We weren’t for some reason ready to fight that kind of war and that is why we lost a lot of matches. As I have said before, this sport requires a short-term memory when it comes to bad performances. We will need to forget about this and get ready for January’s challenging schedule.”

The tournament will conclude Monday, Dec. 30 with third session action as well as the semifinals, consolation matches and seventh-place matches all starting at noon.