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Eastern Michigan University

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Eagles Head to Detroit as Final Exams Approach

Saturday, Dec. 15, 2013 » 12 p.m. » Calihan Hall (8,295) » Detroit, Mich.

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EAGLES HEAD TO DETROIT AS FINAL EXAMS APPROACH: The Eastern Michigan University women's basketball team remains on the road Sunday, Dec. 15, for a non-conference affair versus the University of Detroit Mercy. Tip-off is scheduled for noon at historic Calihan Hall in Detroit, Mich.

EMU enters the game with a 6-1 record after coming up short at the University of Michigan, 89-75, in the "Battle for Washtenaw County," Dec. 11, at the Crisler Center in Ann Arbor. The Titans are 3-7 on the young season following an 85-64 win over Chicago State University, Dec. 7.

Veteran broadcasters Chad Bush and Greg Steiner will have the call on WEMU (89.1 FM) beginning at 11:50 a.m. The game can also be seen locally on Comcast Digital Cable Channel 900 in the Ypsilanti area.

ALL-TIME AGAINST DETROIT: The Eagles and Titans face off for the 23rd time in the program's history with Detroit holding a 14-8 advantage in the all-time series. Sunday's meeting will mark the eighth consecutive season in which the schools have squared off on the hardwood. UDM opened the series with nine consecutive victories before EMU rolled off five wins between 1989 and 1999.

UDM Head Coach Autumn Rademacher is 4-1 against EMU since she arrived in 2008. Each of the games have been hotly-contested battles, with the Titans eking out two win by a combined total of just three points.

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A YEAR MAKES: Despite it being just seven games into the 2013-14 season, Eastern
Michigan's turnaround from just one season ago is monumental. The Eagles notched their first 6-0 start since the 2004-05 campaign. The Eagles rank fifth nationally in scoring at 88.3 ppg. At this point last year, EMU sported a 1-6 record with an average of 54.3 points a game. The offensively-challenged squad did not score its 600th point until the 11th game of the year.

**THE LAST TIME WE MET**: Last season in Ypsilanti, the Eagles fought hard, but eventually fell to the Titans, 61-54, Nov. 18, 2012, at the Convocation Center. The Eagles held just one lead in the game after opening with the first bucket. The Eagles had three in double-figures for scoring with Natachia Watkins leading the way with 15 points. Miranda Tate posted 11 points, while Desyree Thomas added 10 of her own. On the boards, Olivia Fouty grabbed nine rebounds. As a team, the Eagles shot 38.2 percent (21-of-55) from the floor and 30.8 percent (4-of-13) from beyond the arc. Shareta Brown led all scorers with 34 points, shooting 13-of-21 (61.9 percent). As a team, Detroit shot 43.1 percent (22-of-51) from the floor en route to their 61-54 win.

**THE LAST TIME AT CALIHAN HALL**: The Titans shocked the Eagles with a 70-69 overtime win, Dec. 20, 2011, in a non-conference game at Calihan Hall in Detroit, Mich. After being down by 10 points in the first half, EMU rallied to force overtime before falling in the extra frame. Natachia Watkins led the Eagles with a career-best 28 points and nine rebounds while Olivia Fouty notched her third consecutive double-double with 17 points and 10 boards. The Titans placed three players in double-figures en route to shooting 43.8 percent (21-for-48) compared to 41.5 percent (27-for-65) for the Eagles. EMU struggled from beyond the arc, hitting just 1-of-6 (16.7 percent) compared to 35.0 percent (7-for-20) for the Titans. UDM also went to the line 31 times, connecting on 21.

**EMU VERSUS THE HORIZON LEAGUE**: Eastern is 50-39 all-time versus the Indianapolis, Ind. based conference, having played against all nine member institutions. EMU has faced the University of Detroit Mercy more times than any other league member, with the Titans holding a 14-8 lead in the series.

**THREES APLENTY**: The Eagles are on a torrid pace from the outside this season. EMU has already posted 202 three-points attempts in 2013-14, making 59 of them. The Green and White tossed out a season-high 37 three-point tries against UMKC, Dec. 7, the second-most in program history. EMU is on pace for 866 attempts, which would shatter the single-season record of 630 set during the 1999-2000 campaign.

**ROAD LEGS**: Eastern Michigan will not return to the friendly confines on the Convocation Center again until Dec. 31 against Lawrence Tech.

**A BREAK IN THE ACTION**: Due to final exams and the upcoming holidays, EMU enters a stretch in which it will only play three games over the next 20 days. The Green and White will play at the Seawolves Holiday Classic, Dec. 21-22, in Stony Brook, N.Y. before next returning to the court against Lawrence Technological University, Dec. 31.

**STREAKING**: Eastern Michigan's 6-1 record out of the gate is the program's best start to a season since 2004-05 when the Eagles rolled off eight consecutive victories to begin the year. The team's six-game winning streak to open the year was the Eagles' longest since posting a nine-gamer during the 2011-12 campaign.

**A LOOK INSIDE THE SPECIALTY STATS**: The Eagles are averaging 37.1 points per game in the paint, 38.1 points off the bench, 27.3 points per game off turnovers, 16.6 second-chance points and 21.7 fast break points per game.

**YOUTH BEING SERVED**: Heading into the 2013-14 campaign, Head Coach Tory Verdi knew he would be leading a very young team this season as the Eagles welcomed eight newcomers to the roster. In six games, the newcomers have combined for 56.1 percent (347 points) of the squad’s offense.
**BENCH PROVIDING MUCH NEEDED SUPPORT:** Even though the season is only seven games old, the Eastern Michigan bench has shown that it can provide a spark. Versus Michigan (Dec. 11), the bench poured in 45 of the team’s 75 points after the reserves tossed in 41 points at Cleveland State (Nov. 17). EMU reached its season-best with a 55 point showing in the record-setting win over Marygrove (Nov. 30). Last year, the EMU bench averaged just 15.6 points per contest.

**ASSIST-TO-TURNOVER RATIO:** EMU has dished out 31 more assists (126) than turnovers (95). Meanwhile, opponents have committed 43 more turnovers (163) than assists (120).

**LEADING THE MAC:** The Eagles are currently sitting atop the Mid-American Conference in nine categories as well as ranking in the top-five in nine others. The Green and White lead the league in scoring offense (88.3), scoring margin (+23.7), field goal percentage defense (35.9), rebounding offense (51.4), steals (12.0), turnover margin (+9.71), assist-to-turnover ratio (1.3), offensive rebounds (18.6) and defensive rebounds (32.9). Individually, Desyree Thomas is second in the MAC in steals (3.3) and assist-to-turnover ratio (3.5) while ranking seventh in field goal percentage (52.1). Junior transfer Jamaica Bucknor is second in the conference, averaging 3.7 offensive rebounds per contest. Meanwhile, Janay Morton, Desyree Thomas and Olivia Fouty rank in the top-13 in scoring.

**“HOME GAME”:** Eastern Michigan hosted UMKC Saturday, Dec. 7, but instead of the game taking place at the Convocation Center, it instead was played at the 1,000-seat Activities Center on the campus of Madonna University. The change was necessitated as EMU’s home court was occupied by the annual St. Joe’s Holiday Ball. EMU won the game 75-66. This was not the first time EMU has been forced to relocate a home game. During the 2001-02 season, EMU played IPFW at Fenton High School in Fenton, Mich. The Eagles pulled out a 76-60 non-conference victory over the Mastodons.

**A TRIP TO THE STONY BROOK ON THE HORIZON:** The Eastern Michigan University women's basketball team treks to Stony Brook, N.Y. to participate in the Seawolves Holiday Classic hosted by Stony Brook University at Pritchard Gymnasium. The Eagles and Seawolves will be joined by Monmouth University and Wagner College. The Green and White square off versus Wagner Saturday, Dec. 21, followed by a matchup with the Hawks Sunday, Dec. 22. Game time for both contests is scheduled for noon.

**EMU AND THE IN-SEASON TOURNAMENT:** Since winning three consecutive in-season tournaments during the 2004-05 campaign, the Eagles have struggled with a 4-12 record in the seven events since. The Eagles downed the University of Alabama, 52-43, in the opening game of the Fifth Annual Junkanoo Jam, Nov. 23, 2007, at St. George's High School in the Bahamas. The Green and White then posted an 83-67 victory over Hawai‘i, Nov. 20, 2011, and a 79-68 win against Cal State Northridge, Nov. 21, 2011, at the Rainbow Wahine Classic in Honolulu, Hawai‘i. In 2011-12, EMU downed Saint Louis, 66-55, in the opener of the Holiday Hoops Tournament in Seattle, Wash., Dec. 29. Last year, EMU fell to Tulane, 65-71, and Ole Miss, 58-61, at the DoubleTree Classic in New Orleans, La., Dec. 29-30.