EMU Women's Basketball: EMU Headed to the Seawolves Holiday Classic December 16, 2013

Eastern Michigan University

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EMU Headed to the Seawolves Holiday Classic

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EMU HEADED TO SEAWOLVES HOLIDAY CLASSIC: The Eastern Michigan University women's basketball team jets to Stony Brook, N.Y. to participate in the Seawolves Holiday Classic Presented by Hilton Garden Inn at Pritchard Gymnasium on the campus of Stony Brook University. The Eagles and Seawolves will be joined by Monmouth University and Wagner College. Eastern squares off versus the Seahawks Saturday, Dec. 21, followed by a matchup with the Hawks Sunday, Dec. 22.

The trip will mark the first time that EMU has participated in a tournament in the state of New York since the 1998-99 campaign when the team went 2-0 at the Columbia Tournament.

CATCHING THE EAGLES OUT EAST: Neither WEMU nor Eagle All-Access will be making the trip east to broadcast the games of the Seawolves Holiday Classic Presented by Hilton Garden Inn hosted by Stony Brook University, Dec. 21-22. Fans wanting to follow the Eagles can find live stats and links to the video broadcasts at GoSeawolves.org.

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A YEAR MAKES: Despite it being just eight 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 90.2 ppg.
**BACK ON TRACK:** With just one more victory, the Eagles will equal their entire win total from the 2012-13 season. The Green and White finished last season with an 8-22 mark. At this point last year, EMU sported a 1-7 record with an average of 55.6 points a game. The offensively-challenged squad did not score its 700th point until the 13th game of the year.

**OFFENSE LIKE NO OTHER:** The 2013-14 squad has put together an offense like no other in the 38-year history of Eastern Michigan basketball. For the first time in school history, the Eagles have scored 75-or-more points in each of the team's first eight contests. The 1998-99 squad held the previous standard of six straight games of 75+ point games. The 1986-87 also had a streak of five games reaching three-quarters of a century.

**SCORING AT WILL:** The Eagles' offense is on pace for a record-setting season. Having already established the program record for most consecutive games of scoring 75-or-more, the team has also notched the most points during the squad's first eight contests. EMU dropped 722 points during that span, bettering a mark of 613 set during the 1985-86 campaign.

Given their current place, the Eagles should pass the 2,000 point plateau for the eighth time in program history. However, the record for most points averaged by a Mid-American Conference team should be safe considering the 1990-91 Kent State Golden Flashes scored at a rate of 93.6 ppg.

Last season, the Eagles set the dubious record for the fewest points during the first eight contests with just 380.

**MORTON TURNING INTO SOMETHING SPECIAL:** Freshman Janay Morton has so far proven to be a major difference maker for the Eagles in 2013-14. The Brooklyn Park, Minn. product leads the squad in six offensive categories (points, field goals made, field goals attempted, three-pointer attempted, free throws made and free throws attempted) while ranking in the top-three in five others (assists, blocks, minutes, free throw percentage and three-pointers made).

Morton has notched three games of 20-or-more points scored and is one of just eight freshmen nationally ranked in the top 180 in scoring.

**REACHING FOR 75:** Eastern Michigan has posted 75-or-more points in eight games this season. The 1981-82, the 2000-01 and the 2003-04 squads lead the way with 14 games of reaching the three-quarters of a century mark.

**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.

**EMU VERSUS TEAMS IN THE TOURNAMENT:** Eastern Michigan has never faced either Monmouth or Wagner prior to the Seawolves Holiday Classic, Dec. 21-22.

Monmouth, in West Long Branch, N.J., is a member of the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) after previously playing in the Northeast Conference. The Green and White are 12-4 all-time versus the MAAC with victories over Canisius (6-6), Niagara (3-0), Siena (2-0) and Marist (1-0). Wagner, in Staten Island, N.Y., is a member of the NEC, a conference which the Eagles have previously notched wins over Central Connecticut State (1-0), Robert Morris (1-0) and St. Francis (N.Y.) (1-0).

**HEADY TO HIT THE FLOOR FOR THE FIRST TIME:** Eastern Michigan will welcome sophomore Shannise Heady to
the floor for the first-time at the Seawolves Holiday Classic, Dec. 21-22. Heady, who transferred from Seton Hall University, was required by the NCAA to sit out until the fall semester was complete. Last year for the Pirates, Heady saw action in two games going 1-for-2 from the floor with one offensive rebound and one assist.

**HITTING THE CENTURY MARK AT DETROIT:** It was an instant classic at Calihan Hall, as Eastern Michigan was on the plus side of the 104-96 decision at Detroit, Dec. 15. The contest saw the Eagles and Titans combine for 200 points, which ranks second-most in school history. EMU and Central Michigan combined for 220 points to set the Mid-American Conference record for most combined points in a 113-107 double-overtime contest in Mount Pleasant, Mich., Feb. 20, 2010.

EMU's 104 points also marked the most points scored in the series against Detroit, as the Eagles' previous standard was 91 in a victory over UDM, Nov. 28, 1999.

**MORTON EARNS MAC WEST PLAYER OF THE WEEK HONORS:** Janay Morton was named the Mid-American Conference Women's Basketball West Division Player of the Week, the conference office announced Dec. 16. It marked the first time she has won the award in her career. Morton averaged 22.0 points while shooting 35.9 percent from the floor during the span. Defensively, she hauled down 5.5 rebounds to go along with 3.5 assists and 3.0 steals a contest. In total, Morton was 12-of-13 from the free throw line.

In 26 minutes at Michigan, Dec. 11, the Brooklyn Park, Minn. native was 8-for-21 from the floor for 21 points. She followed it up by equaling her career-high with 23 points to go along with six caroms, four assists and three steals.

**WATKINS VERSUS THE "D":"** Senior Natachia Watkins has saved some of her best games for the University of Detroit Mercy, and her last regular season contest against the Titans was no different. During her career, Watkins averaged 17.0 points, five rebounds and a 54.9 shooting percentage (28-of-51) in 24.8 minutes of work against UDM.

The South Euclid, Ohio native had a season-best 21 points on 10-of-13 shooting to go along with five rebounds in 18 minutes of work, Dec. 15. Watkins' previous season-high was a nine-point output at Cleveland State, Nov. 17.

**MAGIC NUMBERS:** When the Eagles have scored at least 70 points, their record is 8-3. Under Head Coach Tory Verdi's leadership, Eastern Michigan is 11-3 when leading at the half and 12-1 when holding a lead with five minutes to play in the game.

**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. Game time versus LTU is scheduled for 1 p.m.

EMU has never faced the Blue Devils, which are in just their second year of playing basketball. The Eagles are 16-2 all-time against non-NCAA Division I foes.