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Recommended Citation
Eastern Michigan University, "EMU Women's Basketball: Eagles and Blue Devils Tangle to Wrap Up 2013 December 23, 2013" (2014). Eastern Michigan University, Department of Intercollegiate Athletics. EMU Archives, Digital Commons @ EMU (http://commons.emich.edu/sports_scr/496)

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Eagles and Blue Devils Tangle to Wrap Up 2013

EAGLES AND BLUE DEVILS TANGLE TO WRAP UP 2013: After a nine-day break from the court for the holidays, the Eastern Michigan University women's basketball team hosts Lawrence Technological University Tuesday, Dec. 31, at the Convocation Center. Game time is set for 1 p.m.

EMU enters the game with a 9-1 record after posting a 2-0 record against Wagner College and Monmouth University in the Stony Brook Seawolves Holiday Classic, Dec. 21-22. The Blue Devils are 5-6 on the season following an 83-62 setback at Siena Heights University, Dec. 14.

With the EMU men's basketball team also in action that day, the game will not be broadcast on WEMU (89.1 FM). Instead, fans can catch the game on Eagle All-Access beginning at 12:50 p.m. with Greg Steiner on the call of the non-conference affair.

CLOSING OUT THE YEAR: Tuesday's game marks the Eagles' final contests during the 2013 calendar year, as the team will usher in 2014 at Kent State University, Jan. 4. Eastern Michigan is 18-18 all-time in the team's final game during the month of December, including winning eight of the last 11 contests dating back to 2002.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!: Eastern Michigan will be playing on New Year's Eve for just the fourth time in program history. EMU last played on the final day of the 1997 calendar year, notching a 68-66 victory at Wright State University. Additionally, EMU fell at Bradley University, 78-51 to wrap up 1994, and lost at McNeese State University, 94-79, to
ALL-TIME VERSUS LAWRENCE TECH: 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.

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A YEAR MAKES: Despite it being 10 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 and have already surpassed their entire win total from the 2012-13 season.

QUICKEST TO 10 VICTORIES IN EMU HISTORY: With a victory over Lawrence Tech, Dec. 31, this year's EMU squad can tie the record for the quickest team to record 10 victories in the school history. The 2004-05 squad bears the standard, reaching its 10th victory in game No. 11, a 71-46 victory over Columbia, Jan. 1, 2005.

NON-CONFERENCE SUCCESS: As the 2013 non-conference schedule comes to a close, EMU is looking to go 10-1 with victory over Lawrence Tech, Dec. 31. Should the Eagles defeat the Blue Devils, it would mark the program's best non-conference winning percentage. The 2004-05 club managed a 80.0 percent clip (12-3) with losses against Indiana, Bowling Green (MAC Championship contest) and Kentucky (WNIT).

THOMAS KEYS EMU TO 2-0 MARK IN STONY BROOK: Senior Desyree Thomas had a solid week as the Eagles went a perfect 2-0 at the Seawolves Holiday Classic in Stony Brook, N.Y., Dec. 21-22. In two games, she averaged 14.0 points, 5.5 rebounds, 4.0 steals and 4.0 assists as EMU surpassed its entire win total from the 2012-13 season. In the victory over Wagner, Thomas posted 17 points to go along with five rebounds and four steals. She followed it up with an 11 point, six rebound, six assist, four steal effort against Monmouth. For her efforts, she was named the MAC Player of the Week by the CollegeSportsMadness.com.

SHOOTING WOES IN NEW YORK: Despite posting a pair of victories at the Seawolves Holiday Classic, Dec. 21-22, the Eagles struggled mightily to shoot the rock. EMU escaped town with just a 29.0 shooting percentage (42-of-142) that included a 21.7 percent (10-of-46) from three-point range. Thankfully, Eastern Michigan made 39-of-45 attempts from the free throw line to go along with forcing 61 turnovers. Monmouth held the Eagles to a season-low 26.4 shooting percentage (19-of-72) but the Green and White made up for it by recording a season-best 91.3 ratio from the charity stripe. Eastern Michigan's 21-of-23 performance is tied for third best in the EMU record book, tying a mark set at Kent State, Feb. 17, 1988. The last time EMU shot better than 90 percent from the foul line in a contest was at Bowling Green, Feb. 12, 2000, when the Eagles made 22-of-24 tosses.

KENT STATE AND MAC PLAY ON THE HORIZON: EMU opens the Mid-American Conference portion of the schedule Saturday, Jan. 4, at Kent State University. Game time is set for 2 p.m at the Memorial Athletic and Convocation Center, in Kent, Ohio. With the new league schedule, this will be the first of two meeting this season against the Golden Flashes, at KSU will come to Ypsilanti on Feb. 6.

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 13-3 when leading at the half and 14-1 when holding a lead with five minutes to play in the game.

A LOOK INSIDE THE SPECIALTY STATS: The Eagles are averaging 35.0 points per game in the paint, 32.0 points off the bench, 25.6 points per game off turnovers, 17.2 second-chance points and 18.7 fast break points per game.
FOR THREE: The Eagles are on a torrid pace from the outside this season. EMU has already posted 273 three-points attempts in 2013-14, making 77 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 819 attempts, which would shatter the single-season record of 630 set during the 1999-2000 campaign.

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 eight games, the newcomers have combined for 52.9 percent (452 points) of the squad’s offense.

ASSIST-TO-TURNOVER RATIO: EMU has dished out 37 more assists (167) than turnovers (130). Meanwhile, opponents have committed 76 more turnovers (237) than assists (161).

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 seven others. The Green and White lead the league in scoring offense (85.5), scoring margin (+19.8), three-point percentage defense (28.2), rebounding offense (49.4), turnover margin (+10.7), assist-to-turnover ratio (1.3), steals (12.6), offensive rebounds (19.0) and defensive rebounds (30.4)