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Eastern Michigan University

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Eastern Claims 95-62 Victory in 2013 Finale

The Eagles had three players post double-digit performances

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**YPSILANTI, Mich. (EMUeagles.com)** -- The Eastern Michigan University's women's basketball team extended its current winning streak to four games with a victory over Lawrence Tech University, Tuesday, Dec. 31, at the Convocation Center. The 95-62 win boosts the Eagles to a 10-1 record going into Mid-American Conference competition, while the Blue Devils fall to 5-7. The 10-1 mark is the quickest to 10 wins in a season since the Green and White went 10-1 during the 2004-05 season.

As a team, the Green and White shot 37-of-77 for 48.1 percent and hit five shots from beyond the arc. The Eagles were formidable under the hoop, as they out-rebounded the Blue Devils 53-30. The squad also came away with 19 assists, 18 steals and six blocks.

The Eagles were led by freshman Cha Sweeney (Toledo, Ohio-Rogers), who recorded 21 points for the Green and White. Redshirt-junior Olivia Fouty (Toledo, Ohio-Sylvania Northview) was just shy of a double-double, as she had 19 points and a game-high nine rebounds. Senior Natachia Watkins (South Euclid, Ohio-Brush) was the third Eagles in double-digit figures, as she added 18 points to the victory. Fouty and senior Desyree Thomas (Waterford, Mich.-Mott) tied for team-highs in assists, as each dished out five dimes.

Lawrence Tech was held to 24-of-63 shooting for a 38.1 percentage, led by Allison Bicknell with 15 points. Bicknell
scored the entirety of her points in the first half after hitting five three-point shots. Hali Buter and Allison Kitchen recorded 12 and 10 points, respectively.

The contest opened up with a three-pointer by Fouty to give the Eagles the early lead. Watkins dropped in two from the charity stripe, while the Blue Devils made their way to the hoop to bring the count to 5-4. A three from Bicknell flopped the score in favor of the visiting team, 7-5, but the Green and White soon found itself in control of the board following a quintet of points from Watkins.

The Blue Devils were slowed after the Eagles activated their full-court press, but Lawrence Tech managed to pull ahead once again after sinking a pair of jump shots. The squads continued to battle as Sweeney drove in for a bucket to tie the game up, 14-14. A steal from Shannise Headly (Hazel Crest, Ill.-Hillcrest (Seton Hall)) allowed her to take the ball all the way to the hoop for a layup, but the slight advantage was short-lived as Allison Kitchen notched a fastbreak jumper to knot the score.

Janay Morton (Brooklyn Park, Minn.-Osseo) snatched an inbound pass under the Lawrence Tech hoop and fed it to Watkins, who hit a jumper from the top of the key. A jumper from Fouty off the glass gave the Eagles the largest margin of the game to that point, as the Green and White held a six-point advantage over its opponent at 22-16.

Following a timeout, Fouty added six points to the Eagles’ count to quickly extend the lead, after which Sweeney showed her versatility by recording a tip-in and a triple, taking the squad to a 35-20 lead. The Blue Devils hit back-to-back threes to end the sudden 11-0 run, all of which took place in the span of just over a minute, but a second three-pointer from Sweeney allowed the Eagles to remain in control of the game with a 40-26 edge.

Despite the hot shooting of Bicknell, who drained five triples in the first half, EMU continued to relentlessly break through Lawrence Tech’s defense and find ways to score by way of drives and mid-range shooting. The Blue Devils kept pace throughout the remainder of the half, but were unable to close the gap that the Eagles had opened up earlier in the contest. The teams headed into the locker rooms as the Green and White held a 54-41 advantage.

EMU boasted three players in double-digit figures at the close of the first half, led by Watkins with 17. Sweeney also contributed 14 while Fouty added 11 of her own. Thomas led in rebounds, assists, and steals as the senior pulled down five boards and recorded a trio of both dimes and grabs. As a team, the Eagles shot 20-of-41 from the floor for a 48.8 percent clip and 91.7 percent from the free throw line. The squad notched nine steals and held the Blue Devils to 15-of-37 from the field. Lawrence Tech was led by Bicknell, whose 15 points came solely from three-point shots. Over half of the the Blue Devils’ points came from behind the arc, as they hit 7-of-16 from three-point range.

Thomas started out the second half with a steal and a layup and Fouty made her way through the paint for a backboard shot before Eman Hubbard gave the Blue Devils their first points of the period. Lawrence Tech mustered a 6-0 run, yet still trailed by 11 points at 60-49.

Eastern answered back soon thereafter with a 8-2 run of its own to pull away from the Blue Devils, earning a 70-53 lead with 13 minutes left to play. A block from Sara Stone (Plymouth, Mich.-Salem) gave the Green and White the opportunity to score, but the Blue Devils forced a turnover to convert on a fastbreak layup. The contest remained stagnant on both sides, as neither team was able to score for over two minutes before Allison Kitchen hit a baseline jumper. Fouty quickly replicated the play on the Eagle basket for a pair of points, bringing the score to 72-57.

Led by Heady and Sweeney, the Eagles put together an 11-2 run to claim an 83-59 edge over the Blue Devils with five minutes remaining. A drive down the center of the key by Fouty started off a final 12-2 run to end the game. The Eagles ended the 2013 calendar year with a 95-62 victory over the Blue Devils.
The Green and White will ring in 2014 and start up conference play when it travels to Ohio to take on Kent State, Jan. 4 at 2 p.m.