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EMU Heads West to Battle NIU on Sunday

Sunday, Jan. 12, 2014 » 1 p.m. CT » Convocation Center (10,000) » DeKalb, Ill.

EMU HEADS WEST TO BATTLE NIU: The Eastern Michigan University women’s basketball team looks to get back on track Sunday, Jan. 12, as it heads west to DeKalb, Ill. to battle Northern Illinois University. The Mid-American Conference tilt is scheduled to begin at 1 p.m. CT at the NIU Convocation Center.

EMU, which had its five-game winning streak snapped against Ball State, enters the game with an 11-2 (1-1 MAC) record. Meanwhile, the Huskies are 5-7 (1-1 MAC) after coming up short at the University of Toledo, 73-71, Jan. 9. Neither WEMU nor Eagle All-Access will be making the trip to broadcast the game. Fans wanting to follow the Eagles can find live stats and links to the video broadcast at NIUHuskies.com.

ALL-TIME VERSUS NIU: The Jan. 12 contest marks the 40th meeting between the Northern Illinois Huskies and Eastern Michigan Eagles, who first played during the 1981-82 season. Eastern leads the overall series, 30-9, and has won 25 of the last 28 games over the Cardinal and Black. The Huskies’ last victory in the series occurred Jan. 17, 2009, when NIU notched a 69-62 overtime victory in DeKalb.

Since the NIU Convocation Center opened in 2002, the Eagles have posted an 8-3 record inside the 10,000-seat multi-purpose arena. Two of Eastern’s three losses have occurred in overtime.

LAST YEAR AGAINST THE HUSKIES: In the first meeting last season in Ypsilanti, Mich., Eastern Michigan held off a feisty Northern Illinois squad, 67-62, inside the Convocation Center, Jan. 31, 2013. The Eagles surrendered a substantial second-half advantage, but posted several critical defensive stops in the waning moments to hold on for
the win.
Then in the season finale in DeKalb, the Eagles defeated the Huskies, 54-45, at the NIU's Convocation Center, Feb. 28, 2013. Desyree Thomas scored a then-career high 17 points to go along with five rebounds to lead the Green and White. Chelsea Hite also grabbed five boards while recording her career-high of 13 points. The Eagles outscored the Huskies, 26-12, in the paint en route to 22-of-57 shooting from the floor for a 38.6 percentage.

**EMU QUICK HITTERS:** The Eagles surpassed their entire win total from the 2012-13 season in just nine games ...
The Eagles are out-scoring opponents by 23.9 points in victories ...
Eight of the Eagles' 11 victories this season have come by double figures ...
EMU and Toledo are the only teams in the league that feature four players that average double figures in points.

**CARDINALS SNAP EAGLES' FIVE-GAME WINNING STREAK:** EMU saw its five-game winning streak come to an end at the hands of Ball State, Jan. 9, as the Cardinals came away with a 70-66 decision over the Eagles. Olivia Fouty led the way for the Eagles, posting her sixth double-double of the 2013-14 season with 16 points and 13 rebounds. Cha Sweeney and Janay Morton each contributed 13 points, while Natachia Watkins chipped in with eight points and eight boards. Three Cardinals reached double figures in scoring, led by 18 points from Brittany Carter.

Ball State made it to the charity stripe nearly twice as much as the Green and White, shooting 18-of-33 for 54.5 percent. From the floor, BSU made 37.5 percent of its attempts (21-of-56), including 10-of-26 from beyond the arc. The Cardinals controlled the boards throughout the night, outrebounding EMU, 51-40.

**LEADING THE MAC:** The Eagles sit atop the Mid-American Conference in seven categories as well as ranking in the top-five in eight others. The Green and White lead the league in scoring offense (84.9), scoring margin (+18.8), rebounding offense (47.7), turnover margin (+10.5), assist-to-turnover ratio (1.3), steals (13.0) and offensive rebounds (18.7).

**FOUTY TURNING INTO A DOUBLE-DOUBLE MACHINE:** Forward Olivia Fouty has 14 career double-doubles, which ranks sixth most in program history since the stat began being tracked during the 1999-2000 campaign.

**APPROACHING 900:** Senior Natachia Watkins has scored 871 points in her career and ranks 23rd all-time. There are currently 21 players in the 900-point club for EMU women's basketball.

**CLIMBING THE ASSIST CHARTS:** Senior Desyree Thomas is currently fifth in the EMU record book with 403 career assists. Stephanie Smiley (1998-02) holds the EMU standard with 577 helpers.

**INTERESTING STATS ABOUT EMU:** In its 11 victories this season, EMU has scored 87.5 points while the opposition has posted 63.6 points. In those games, opponents shot 36.7 percent from the field compared to 41.5 percent for the Eagles. In the defeats, the Eagles only posted 70.5 points, while giving up 79.5 Another factor in the Eagles' success was the ability to control the glass. EMU has grabbed 49.2 rebounds in the wins while forcing opponents to turn the ball over 24.5 times. In the losses, the Green and White are -8.0 on the glass (39.5 to 47.5).

**EMU SUPPORTS PLAY4KAY BY WEARING PINK:** EMU will show its support of the Women's Basketball Coaches Association (WBCA) breast cancer awareness and fundraising program, "Play4Kay" (formerly known as WBCA Pink Zone), by sporting pink uniforms Sunday, Jan. 26, in its home game against the University of Akron. Game time is scheduled for 2 p.m. at the Convocation Center.
The annual Play4Kay initiative provides coaches and student athletes around the country the opportunity to "come together as one" to raise awareness for breast cancer research on the court, in their communities and beyond. Throughout February, high schools, universities and local organizations are dedicated to raise funds and awareness to support the Kay Yow Cancer Fund's (KYCF), mission of supporting scientific research focused on women's
cancers, as well as projects assisting the underserved community.

**MAGIC NUMBERS:** When the Eagles have scored at least 70 points, their record is 10-3. Under Head Coach Tory Verdi's leadership, Eastern Michigan is 15-3 when leading at the half and 16-1 when holding a lead with five minutes to play in the game.

**FOR THREE!:** The Eagles are on a torrid pace from the outside this season. EMU has already posted 334 three-points attempts in 2013-14, making 96 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 770 attempts, which would shatter the single-season record of 630 set during the 1999-2000 campaign.

Last season, EMU made 98 of its 358 three-point attempts.

**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 13 games, the newcomers have combined for 52.7 percent (582 points) of the squad's offense.

**NON-CONFERENCE SUCCESS:** The Eagles won 10 games during the non-conference portion of the schedule, posting a double-digit win total for the third time in school history. All three such instances have come in the last 10 seasons.

Only four other MAC programs have ever posted seasons with 10 or more non-conference wins. Bowling Green has accomplished the feat seven times (2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11, 2011-12, 2013-14), Toledo has done it twice (2009-10, 2012-13) while Kent State (2008-09) and Miami (2011-12) have each done it once.

**EMU VERSUS THE MAC:** This is EMU's 33rd season competing in the Mid-American Conference. The Eagles hold a 238-293 record against conference foes and have posted winning seasons in the MAC in 11 of the last 13 campaigns. EMU has had the most success against Northern Illinois, going 30-9, and the least versus Bowling Green, 14-47. Western Michigan has been the Green and White's most frequent opponent with 73 meetings, while Buffalo holds the distinction of the fewest conference games against the Eagles with 20.

**WESTERN MICHIGAN ON THE HORIZON:** The Jan. 15 contest marks the 75th meeting between the Western Michigan Broncos and Eastern Michigan Eagles, who first played during the 1976-77 season. EMU leads the all-time series, 43-31, and has won 15 of the last 18 meetings. Eastern took both regular season meetings, but Western eliminated the Eagles with an 80-72 victory in the MAC Tournament First Round at the Convocation Center.