EMU Women's Basketball: Eagles and Falcons Battle Thursday in BG January 21, 2014

Eastern Michigan University

Follow this and additional works at: http://commons.emich.edu/sports_scr

Recommended Citation

Eastern Michigan University, "EMU Women's Basketball: Eagles and Falcons Battle Thursday in BG January 21, 2014" (2014). Eastern Michigan University, Department of Intercollegiate Athletics. EMU Archives, Digital Commons @ EMU (http://commons.emich.edu/sports_scr/522)
Eagles and Falcons Battle Thursday in BG

Thursday, Jan. 23, 2014 » 7 p.m. » Stroh Center (4,280) » Bowling Green, Ohio

EAGLES AND FALCONS BATTLE THURSDAY IN BG: Following a heartbreaking 84-83 overtime setback at Buffalo, the Eastern Michigan University women's basketball team remains on the road Thursday, Jan. 23, for tilt at Bowling Green State University. Tip-off for the Mid-American Conference cross-divisional contest is scheduled for 7 p.m. at the Stroh Center in Bowling Green, Ohio. The Eagles enter the game with a mark of 12-4 (2-3 MAC). Meanwhile, the Falcons are 14-3 (4-1 MAC) after an overtime loss at defending MAC Tournament Champion Central Michigan University, 82-79, Jan. 18.

Veteran broadcasters Chad Bush and Greg Steiner will have the call on WEMU (89.1 FM) beginning at 6:50 p.m. Live video of the game can also be found on BGSUFalcons.com (subscription-based).

ALL-TIME AGAINST BOWLING GREEN: The Jan. 23 contest marks the 62nd meeting between the Bowling Green Falcons and the Eastern Michigan Eagles, who first met during the 1976-1977 season. BGSU has dominated the all-time series, 47-14, including winning the last 11 meetings between the two schools. Last season, the Falcons captured a 61-47 victory at the Convocation Center, Jan. 27, 2013. EMU's last victory in the series occurred Feb. 19, 2005, when the Eagles notched a 57-52 win at the Convocation Center.

With the new 18-game league schedule, this will be the first of two meetings with the Falcons this season. BGSU will come to Ypsilanti on Feb. 15 for the second leg of a doubleheader at the Convocation Center.
APPROACHING 900: Senior Natachia Watkins has scored 898 points in her career and ranks 22nd all-time. Over the last nine games, the South Euclid, Ohio native is averaging 11.8 points and 7.1 rebounds. During that stretch she has also reached double figures in points in seven games, including a season-best 21 point effort at Detroit, Dec. 15.

STOP, THIEF!: With her three steals at Buffalo, Jan. 18, senior Desyree Thomas became the EMU all-time leader in steals in a career with 267. Thomas passed Ryan Coleman's previous standard of 265 swipes which has stood since the 2006 campaign. The Mid-American Conference's active leader in steals, Thomas ranks eighth nationally among current players in steals just ahead of Toledo's Andola Dortch with 263. Overall, Thomas' total is tied with Kent State's B.J. Smith-Goldmann (1993-97) for 17th place in league history. Toledo's Kim Knuth (1995-99) holds the MAC standard with 368 steals.

SHE SHOOTS AND SCORES: Freshman Janay Morton posted a career-high 34 points and seven three-pointers in the Eagles' overtime loss at Buffalo, Jan. 18. Morton became part of an elite group, as she now ranks 15th in the EMU laurels for most points scored in a single contest. Her seven three-pointers also put her in a tie for fifth-most made in a single game, and are the most by an EMU student-athlete since Tavelyn James drained a record 10 treys against Kent State University, Feb. 11, 2012. Furthermore, her 63.6 percent (7-of-11) from beyond the arc ranks 12thbest in EMU history.

TOP FRESHMEN SCORERS: Janay Morton is one of just 15 freshman ranked nationally in the NCAA's top 250 scorers. The first-year players include: Chrishae Rowe, Oregon (21.5), Malia Tate-DeFreitas, Hampton (19.1), Kaela Davis, Georgia Tech (18.6), Larryn Brooks, Indiana (17.8), Sara Dickey, Evansville (17.4), Raven Bankston, Delaware St. (17.3), Kaylah Keys, High Point (17.0), Fanni Szabo, Dartmouth (16.9), Jessica Jackson, Arkansas (16.4), Diamond DeShields, North Carolina (16.1), Nia Coffey, Northwestern (15.6), Amanda Zahui B., Minnesota (15.0), Natalie Butler, Georgetown (14.9), Morton (14.9) and Leticia Romero, Kansas St. (14.6).


SEEKING 20/20 VISION: One of Head Coach Tory Verdi's goals with the team's up-tempo offense is to create more possessions and to put up 20-or-more shots than the opposition. The Eagles have accomplished that feat on four occasions, including taking a season-best 33 more shots than Marygrove, Nov. 30. The Eagles have been close to the goal in three other games, most recently taking 18 more field goal attempts than Buffalo, Jan. 18.

NORTHWEST OHIO COMES TO YPSI: Eastern Michigan has long had a history of pulling student-athletes from Northwest Ohio, but Head Coach Tory Verdi has taken it to a whole new level. The Eagles feature three products from the Toledo area including Olivia Fouty (Sylvania Northview), KaBria Walker (Toledo Rogers) and Cha Sweeney (Toledo Rogers). The three have combined for 30.3 percent of the team's rebound and 32.4 percent of its offense. The trend will continue in 2014-15 with two more standout recruits from the Glass City set to make the trip north.

MAC TITANS: When the Eagles and Falcons have tangled over the past 11 seasons, it has almost been a guarantee that one of the teams (if not both) is on top of the MAC standings. However, last year's contest broke a streak of 13 consecutive meetings that had featured the league's divisional leader. BGSU had been in first place in 12 of those games with EMU holding down the divisional lead in five contests. Additionally, both teams were first in their respective divisions four times (2006, 2008, 2010 and 2012).

BRAZZLE LEAVES THE SQUAD: EMU Head Coach Tory Verdi has announced Jan. 21 that senior Denaya
**Brazzle** has elected to leave the women's basketball team, effective immediately. A senior from Portland, Ore., Brazzle saw action in 12 games this season recording 16 points in 67 minutes of action. In her two seasons in Ypsilanti she appeared in 35 contests, averaging 1.9 points and 0.8 rebounds.

**TAVELYN JAMES CHECKS IN FROM ABROAD**: Former women's basketball player Tavelyn James (2008-12) recently took some time out of her professional career at Athlete Celje in Celje, Slovenia to catch up with the EMU Department of Athletics and talk about her transition to the international scene and how her experience at EMU helped with preparation for living abroad. For the complete story, visit EMUEagles.com

**'GET A T-O BABY!':** Unlike Dick Vitale's famous catchphrase where he lets coaches know they need a timeout during ESPN broadcasts, EMU Head Coach Tory Verdi and his team need to force more turnovers than they give away; so far this season, the Eagles have done a great job buying into this system. EMU has had fewer turnovers than its opposition in 15 of its 16 games this season. The only time Eastern coughed up the basketball more than its competition was in a setback to Northern Illinois, Jan. 12. Moreover, the Green and White has forced 30 or more turnovers three times throughout the 2013-14 campaign in wins versus Marygrove (Nov. 30), Wagner (Dec. 21) and Monmouth (Dec. 22).

**SHARING AND STEALING THE ROCK**: Aside from averaging double figures in scoring, EMU senior guard Desyree Thomas finds scoring opportunities for her team in other ways. She leads the conference in steals with 52 on the season while also tallying 74 assists good for third in the MAC. Moreover, the 126 combined assists and steals are the most out of any player in the league, just ahead of Toledo's Andola Dortch, who ranks second in both categories (79 assists, 46 steals).

**LAST YEAR AGAINST BGSU**: In the only meeting between the two programs last year, EMU fell in Mid-American Conference play at home to Bowling Green by the final score of 61-47, Jan. 27, 2013. The Eagles shot 19-of-46 (41.3 percent) while the visiting Falcons (13-6, 4-2 MAC) shot 17-of-45 (37.8 percent). Bowling Green was able to get to the line quite often, making 21-of-27 free throws while the Green and White converted 7-of-13 from the charity stripe. Bianca Cage led the Eagles on offense with 15 points, while BGSU's Baily Cairnduff led all scorers with 18 points. Natachia Watkins showed that she can get it done on both sides of the ball scoring 14 points, handing out four assists, and snatching five steals.

The Falcons won the battle of the boards, getting 42 rebounds, including 14 offensive boards compared to the Eagles’ 24 total rebounds. BGSU also outscored EMU, 11-2, in second chance points.

**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 22.4 points in victories ... Eight of the Eagles’ 12 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.

**LEADING THE MAC**: The Eagles sit atop the Mid-American Conference in six categories as well as ranking in the top-five in nine others. The Green and White lead the league in scoring margin (+14.2), rebounding offense (47.1), turnover margin (+8.88), steals (12.6), turnover margin (1.1) and offensive rebounds (18.4).

**INTERESTING STATS ABOUT EMU**: In its 12 victories this season, EMU has scored 87.2 points while the opposition has posted 64.8 points. In those games, opponents shot 36.8 percent from the field compared to 41.8 percent for the Eagles. In the defeats, the Eagles have only posted 69.5 points, while giving up 80.0 Another factor in the Eagles' success has been the ability to control the glass. EMU has grabbed 48.8 rebounds in the wins while forcing opponents to turn the ball over 23.8 times. In the losses, the Green and White are -7.0 on the glass (41.8 to 48.8).
CLIMBING THE ASSIST CHARTS: Senior Desyree Thomas is currently fifth in the EMU record book with 411 career assists. Stephanie Smiley (1998-02) holds the EMU standard with 577 helpers.

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), 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.

AKRON ON THE HORIZON: The Jan. 26 contest against the University of Akron marks the 32nd meeting between the Zips and Eagles, who first met during the 1981-82 season. UA leads the series, 17-14. The teams met only once during the 2012-13 regular season when Rachel Tecca tossed one off the glass with just 0.7 seconds still showing to give Akron the 82-81 decision at James A. Rhodes Arena, Feb. 6, 2013.