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Eastern Michigan University

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Second Half Surge Lifts Bowling Green Past EMU Hoops, 71-57

Janay Morton and Cha Sweeney score 18 points each to pace the Eagles in the loss
After scoring a career-high 34 points in EMU's previous game against Buffalo, Morton went right where she left off, scoring the first five points for the Eagles. Both teams failed to put points on the board in the first two minutes before the Falcons scored first with a bucket by Miriam Justinger. Morton responded before BGSU tallied four straight; however, a Morton triple cut the lead to one. Four more Bowling Green points brought its lead to five, but Sweeney knocked down a long range jumper to make it 10-8. Morton continued to be the offensive threat, hitting a pair of baskets to score nine of her team's first 12 points, as the game remained at a standstill with 12:54 remaining in the opening half.

EMU experienced a scoring drought that lasted over five minutes, prompting a 7-0 run by Bowling Green. After receiving a break on the bench, Morton checked back into the game and ended the scoreless streak by connecting on one-of-two free throws to individually reach double digits in points. Thirty seconds later, she ended the EMU field goal dry spell just a jumper just inside the charity stripe, cutting the deficit to four. Olivia Fouty (Toledo, Ohio-Sylvania Northview) proceeded to drain one from the elbow to get the Eagles within two, 19-17, with over six minutes to go in the first half.

The margin stayed between two to seven points for the rest of the opening twenty minutes. When a Hoekstra half court heave bounced off the front of the rim, the Eagles entered the locker room trailing, 28-23. EMU sank one-third of its shots in the first half, going 9-of-27 from the floor, including 2-of-6 from beyond the arc. Morton led the way with 14 of the 23 points, making all five of her attempts from the field and converting 3-of-4 at the line. Fouty tallied four points while grabbing seven of the Eagles' 18 first half rebounds.

Bowling Green shot 40 percent (12-of-30) in half number one, but struggled from three-point land at a 15.4 percent clip (2-of-13). The Falcons found most of its success in the paint, recorded 18 points in that area. Halfhill led all BGSU scorers with eight points, while Rogers chalked up six points and a team-high five rebounds, helping the Falcons hold a slight advantage on the boards, 20-18.

Coming out of the break, BGSU's Rogers scored five straight to double the Falcons' lead, 33-23, forcing EMU Head Coach Tory Verdi to call timeout just 96 seconds into the second half. The timeout didn't help as Bowling Green continued its run. Five minutes into the final twenty minutes, Jamaica Bucknor (New Haven, Conn.-Weaver (ASA College)) finally scored EMU's first points of the half, ending a 15-0 streak for BGSU. Hoekstra recorded the next 11 points for the Falcons, but Sweeney and Desyree Thomas (Waterford, Mich.-Mott.) notched triples on back-to-back possessions.

Natachia Watkins (South Euclid, Ohio-Brush) started to get things going offensively after going scoreless in the first half. The EMU senior scored five straight points for the Green and White in the span of one minute. Sweeney also provided a spark by scoring 10 of the team's final 16 points. However, BGSU kept the game out of reach as Eastern could only get within the final tally of 14 for the rest of the contest. The EMU defense held the Falcons to just three made field goals in the final 11:58 of the game, but Bowling Green was successful at the charity stripe, sinking 17 free throws down the stretch.

Following back-to-back games on the road, the Green and White returns to the friendly confines of the Convocation Center, Jan. 26, hosting the University of Akron Zips. The Sunday matinee is set to tip off at 2 p.m. and can be heard on WEMU (89.1 FM).