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Eastern Michigan University

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EMU Soccer Hits the Road for First Time in 2014

Eagles battle Michigan State, Aug. 29, before facing No. 16 Texas Tech, Aug. 31

YPSILANTI, Mich. (EMUEagles.com) -- After kicking off the season with a pair of victories at Scicluna Field, the Eastern Michigan University soccer team hits the road for the first time in 2014. The Green and White starts life on the road with the short drive to East Lansing, Mich., Aug. 29, to face the Spartans of Michigan State University at 2 p.m. After the in-state battle, EMU flocks south to South Bend, Ind. for a contest against No. 16 Texas Tech University, Aug. 31. The Sunday morning game, set to begin at 11 a.m., will take place at Alumni Stadium on the campus of the University of Notre Dame as part of the Notre Dame Invitational.

EAGLES OPEN THE SEASON WITH VICTORIOUS HOME WEEKEND: Starting off the season at the friendly confines of Scicluna Field, the Eagles protected their home pitch with two 2-0 victories. First, Coach Scott Hall's squad took down Fordham on Friday, Aug. 22, controlling most of the game and scoring one goal in each half from Angela Vultaggio and Emily Dzik for the season-opening win. Riding the momentum into Sunday, the Eagles capitalized on their scoring opportunities with two goals by Vultaggio in a span of 53 seconds proving to be all Eastern needed to get the win. With the two-goal lead at the break, the pressure of the IU attack was strong throughout the 45-minute second half as the visitors tried to mount a comeback; nonetheless, Megan McCabe and the EMU backline defended well to keep the Hoosiers off the scoreboard. The victory over IU was the program's first win over a Big Ten Conference opponent since EMU knocked off Michigan State, 1-0, Sept. 3, 1999.
CRACKING THE NSCAA GREAT LAKES REGION POLL: Following a perfect 2-0 opening weekend, the EMU soccer team came in at No. 8 in the NSCAA/Continental Tire NCAA Division I Great Lakes Region rankings. The first poll of the season was released, Aug. 25, and Eastern was one-of-two MAC schools in the rankings. Miami University cracked the poll at No. 10, while the remaining eight teams were Big Ten Conference institutions. Penn State University topped the rankings, followed closely by the University of Michigan.

MEET MICHIGAN STATE: The Eagles and Spartans will meet for the third straight season. Like facing Indiana last weekend, Eastern will look to avenge a one-goal defeat at the hands of a Big Ten opponent. Last season, penalty kicks doomed EMU as it fell, 2-3, to MSU at Scicluna Field, Sept. 15. Trailing 2-0 with less than 20 minutes to play after allowing a goal and a penalty kick, the Eagles roared all the way back to tie the contest at two goals apiece. However, a foul in the box with just 2:40 remaining set up a penalty kick for the Spartans, and they capitalized to take the lead for good, holding on for the one-goal decision.

Like EMU, Michigan State also started off the season with a pair of victories. The Spartans won twice in the state of California, beating San Diego State 3-1 before sneaking past Cal St. Fullerton, 1-0. MSU goalkeeper Courtney Clem was a primary factor in the two wins, making a total of 17 saves to capture Big Ten Defensive Player of the Week accolades. In the first two games of her collegiate career, freshman Jamie Cheslik scored a goal in each contest to pace the Spartans on the offensive side of the field.

RED RAIDER RADAR: For the first time in history, Texas Tech and EMU will square off on the pitch. The Red Raiders enter the week as the No. 16 team in the country after blowing past Oral Roberts, 5-0, to begin the season. Texas Tech is coming off a strong 2013 campaign that included an 18-2-3 record and advancing to the second round of the NCAA Tournament. All Big-12 First Team and all-region honoree Janine Beckie returns for her junior year after scoring 12 goals to lead the Red Raiders last season. She continued right where she left off by finding the back of the net in the win over Oral Roberts. Teammate Ali Murphy distributed four assists in the victory, and keeper Lauren Watson secured the shutout.

ANGELA VULTAGGIO NAMED MAC OFFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE WEEK: After leading the EMU soccer team to a pair of 2-0 victories to start the season, senior Angela Vultaggio earned the first MAC Offensive Player of the Week distinction for the 2014 season. The senior Eagle picks up the weekly award for the fourth time in her career.

The 2013 MAC Offensive Player of the Year picked up right where she left off last season with an impressive start to the 2014 campaign. Vultaggio scored three of her team's four goals on opening weekend in wins over Fordham, Aug. 22, and Indiana, Aug. 24. Four of her seven shots landed on goal as she paced the EMU offensive attack.

Vultaggio scored her first goal of the season in the victory over Fordham; the keeper came to the top of the box, and the senior picked her spot and placed it with perfection in the back of the net to give the Green and White the 1-0 advantage.

In the win over Indiana, Vultaggio, known for having a knack of finding the back of the net, struck all three of her shots on goal within three minutes of one another, and her final two were successful in getting past the keeper in the 24th and 25th minutes. Her goals were within 53 seconds of one another as the Chesterfield, Mich. native rifled a strike in the upper left-hand corner of the net for the goal before converting on a 30-yard run. Vultaggio did not miss her one-on-one opportunity, making a shifty move to stymie the keeper and put the ball away for the two-goal advantage. The two-goal contest marked the fourth multi-goal game of her EMU career.

SHOW STOPPER: Eastern Michigan junior goalkeeper Megan McCabe held opponents scoreless in 180 minutes over the weekend, helping the Eagles to a pair of 2-0 victories over Fordham, Aug. 22, and Indiana, Aug. 24. The Arlington Heights, Ill. native started off the season of the right foot with the two shutouts, facing a total of 32 shots and stopping all seven attempts on goal.

In the win over Fordham, McCabe made two saves and managed the game well defensively by taking to her back line throughout the contest, proving why she was selected as a team captain. Against the Hoosiers, McCabe made
five fantastic saves to secure back-to-back shutouts to start the year. She turned away shot after shot as Indiana fired 24 in her direction throughout the 90 minutes. Starting the second half with a two-goal lead, the EMU keeper was prepared for the offensive onslaught brought by Indiana. For 45 minutes, McCabe faced countless attacks as the Hoosiers took 15 shots in the second half, including four on goal. Twice, she denied headers from IU's Jessie Bujouves, who scored two goals in Indiana's season-opening victory on Friday. One of the saves was a dive at the left post, where the junior keeper sacrificed her entire body to make the stop.

**POWER PLAYS:** As Eastern takes its first road trip of the season, the gauntlet of the grueling non-conference schedule continues for Coach Scott Hall and his squad. The Green and White are currently in the midst of playing five consecutive games against teams from the five "power" conferences. EMU started the stretch with a 2-0 victory over Indiana at home, but the four remaining games take place away from the friendly confines of Scicluna Field. After the road match at Michigan State followed by the neutral site contest versus nationally-ranked Texas Tech, the Eagles flock to Oregon for games against the Oregon Ducks, Sept. 5 and the Oregon State Beavers, Sept. 7. Similar to last season, the tough non-conference schedule will test EMU and prepare the team for the Mid-American Conference slate.

**MILES UPON MILES:** After two home exhibition matches as well as two games at Scicluna Field to begin the regular season, EMU will spend 35 days away from Ypsilanti for six road contests. Before the Eagles return home, they will travel a total of 3,171 miles during the six-game road trip. The longest venture will be out to the West Coast to face Oregon and Oregon State; the distance from Ypsilanti to Eugene, Ore. is 2,373 miles. Life on the rigorous road ends Sept 26 in Oxford, Ohio as Eastern battles Miami University to kick off MAC play. Two days later, the team returns home to host Ball State in a Sunday afternoon affair, Sept. 28.

**OFF TO OREGON:** Next up for the Green and White is by far the longest road trip of the season. The Eagles will hit the West Coast, soaring 2,373 miles into Oregon for two matchups against PAC-12 foes. First, EMU will square off against the University of Oregon, Sept. 5, under the lights of Pape Field for a 7 p.m. local first touch. Wrapping up the excursion, Eastern takes on Oregon State University in Corvallis, Ore., Sept. 7 at 1 p.m. PDT.