Summer 8-29-2014

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Eastern Michigan University

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Recommended Citation
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Michigan State Hands EMU Soccer First Loss of the Season

Spartans down the Eagles 3-0 in East Lansing, Mich.

8/29/2014 4:42:00 PM

EAST LANSING, Mich. (EMUEagles.com) – In the first road contest of the 2014 campaign, the Eastern Michigan University soccer team fell 3-0 to Michigan State University Friday afternoon, Aug. 29, at DeMartin Stadium. The Spartans (3-0-0) scored once in the first half and added a pair of insurance goals in the final 45 minutes to hand the Eagles (2-1-0) their first loss of the season.

Reigning Mid-American Conference Offensive Player of the Week Angela Vultaggio took a team-high four shots for Eastern Michigan, while fellow seniors Bianca Rossi and Martha Stevens each fired two shots on goal. In her first start since 2012 after missing last season due to injury, EMU keeper Jenna O’Dell (0-1-0) made three saves for the Green and White.

The Eagles were held scoreless for the first time in 2014 by Courtney Clem (3-0-0), the Big Ten Defensive Player of the Week. Clem stopped all five shots on goal to record the shutout. To help the MSU goalkeeper get the win, Megan Marsack, Allyson Krause and Rachel VanPoppelen scored goals on the offensive side of the field. The Spartans took 15 shots, while EMU attempted 12; MSU ended the contest with a 6-5 advantage on corner kicks.
While each team took a corner kick in the early stages of the contest, the first quality scoring opportunity came in the 14th minute as Michigan State's Lisa Vogel clanked a shot off the crossbar. However, the pressure continued to be applied by the Spartans, and another corner kick gave MSU the game's first goal. On the set piece, Alexandra Gjonaj sent the ball in from the corner, finding Marsack in the far side of the box. The senior midfielder re-directed the ball into the upper corner of the net out of O'Dell reach. The goal in the 15th minute was the first allowed by the EMU defense, snapping a 194-minute scoreless streak.

The Eagles put on a solid counterattack in the 29th minute but could not find the net. Emily Dzik blasted a long ball to Rossi, who made a run down the center of the field. The senior dished off to Vultaggio, and the EMU forward saw an opening before a Spartan intervened for the potential goal-saving block.

With less than four minutes remaining in the opening half, Stevens fired a shot on target, but Clem made the save to give her team the one-goal lead going into halftime. The Spartans had the advantage on the scoreboard, but Eastern out-shot MSU by a 7-5 margin, including 3-2 in shots on goal. EMU also had four opportunities on corner kicks, compared to just three for Michigan State.

Four minutes into the second half, MSU tried to increase its lead, but O'Dell got her fingers on a shot to make a diving stop and knock the ball out of harm's way. The ensuing corner kick was unsuccessful as the EMU defense stood strong to keep the Eagles in the contest.

In the 61st minute, the Spartan attack continued as Krause placed the ball into the back of the net, giving Michigan State a 2-0 lead with 29:41 left in the contest. Krause later provided an assist on another MSU goal in the 78th minute, and the Eagles were kept off the scoreboard for the first time this season.

The Eagles will look to get back to their winning ways, flocking 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.