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Eastern Michigan University

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Softball Splits Day One of USC Upstate Tournament

Eagles defeat Virginia, 3-1, before falling to USC Upstate, 8-0 in game two

SPARTANBURG, S.C. (EMUEagles.com) – The Eastern Michigan University softball team split day one of the USC Upstate Tournament as the Eagles defeated Virginia, 3-1 in game one before falling to the Upstate Spartans, 8-0 in five innings in game two.

With the Eagles’ victory over Virginia, Head Coach Melissa Gentile became just the fifth coach in EMU softball history to win the first game as the coach of Eastern, as the last was Eric Oakley when he served as the interim head coach during the 2010 season.

Game One: Eastern Michigan 3, Virginia 1

A leadoff walk and a single to center field in the bottom of the first from Virginia put runners on first and third before the Green and White recorded its first out of the inning on a foul ball to first base. The Cavaliers’ loaded the bases when Megan Harris capitalized on the second walk of the inning before Lindsay Rich (Perrysburg, Ohio-Perrysburg) recorded her first strikeout of the season. The Eagles were unable to close out the inning unscathed as Katie Park was hit by a pitch, allowing Harris to touch home and score the first run of the contest before the final batter of the inning was retired.

Eastern looked to get its offense going in the top of the second inning when Rich reached first on a fielder’s choice...
before freshman Katy Wyman (Kalamazoo, Mich.-Portage Central) drove her first career hit through the right side of the field with one out. A Virginia fielding error put runners in scoring position for the Green and White when Taylor Wagner (Marshalltown, Iowa-Marshalltown) reached on a fielder’s choice, while Rich and Wyman each advanced a base from the 'Hoos fielding error.

The Eagles knotted the score at 1-1 in the top of the second when Rich scored on a wild pitch before Myranda Barnes (Ypsilanti, Mich.-Belleville) picked up EMU's second walk of the inning. The Green and White took the 2-1 advantage over Virginia when a second wild pitch allowed Wyman to score forcing Cavalier Head Coach Blake Miller to make a pitching change. Eastern pushed one final run across the plate to extend its lead to two when Wagner crossed home on a passed ball, allowing EMU to take the 3-1 lead heading into the top of the third inning.

Virginia threatened to score in the bottom of the fifth inning after back-to-back singles put runners in scoring position, but Rich and the Eastern defense sat down three-consecutive batters to maintain its 3-1 lead heading into the top of the sixth.

Rich came up with a big seventh inning for EMU as she struck out the first two batters before retiring the final out with a pop up in the circle to secure the Eagles' first win of the 2014 season.

Wyman led the way for EMU, notching two hits in her collegiate debut, while Lindsay Smith (Seville, Ohio-Cloverleaf) and Jenn Lucas (Pinckney, Mich.-Pinckney) added one a piece. Rich (1-0) went the distance in the circle, recording her first win of the season with six strikeouts, while allowing only four hits.

Virginia's Lauren Chapdelaine (0-1) suffered the loss in the circle, throwing 1.1 innings, while Lindsay Mayer pitched 3.2 innings and Marcy Bowdren closed out the final two innings for the Cavaliers. Freshman Iyana Hughes led Virginia at the plate with two hits, while Park had the lone RBI of the contest.

Game Two: USC Upstate 8, Eastern Michigan 0

USC Upstate jumped out to an early 1-0 lead over Eastern with a leadoff home run over the center field fence. The Spartans put their second run on the board when Shelleie Robinson singled up the middle scoring Dana Landers, who doubled off the center field fence earlier in the inning.

Upstate extended its lead to 3-0 when a deep sacrifice fly to center field allowed Robinson to come in from third base before a pop up to Amanda Stanton (Homer Glen, Ill.-Lockport Twp.) closed out the inning.

The Spartans continued to light up the scoreboard in the bottom of the third inning when the USC Upstate took the 7-0 lead with three hits and four runs. Eastern broke up the no-hitter in top of the fourth inning when Smith drove her second hit of the day to the left side of the field, but the Eagles were unable to capitalize on the leadoff hit.

USC Upstate added an eighth run in the bottom of the fourth when Robinson singled up the left field line, scoring Schneider from second base. The run was all the Spartans needed to take the 8-0 victory after only five innings of play.

Eastern's lone hit of the game came in the top of the fourth from Smith, while freshman Abbie Minsker (Howell, Mich.-Hartland) suffered the loss in the circle (0-1), hurling one inning. Freshman Alyssa Huntley (Sterling Heights, Mich.-Stevenson) saw her first action on the mound, pitching 1.2 innings as Rich came in on relief throwing the final 1.1 innings.
Robinson and Cheyenne Griffin each knocked in two RBI for the Spartans, while Hannah Alexander (1-0) picked up the win on the mound, pitching four innings with eight strikeouts and Lexi Shubert pitched the final inning in relief.

The Eagles will conclude their first tournament of the 2014 season, Saturday, Feb. 9 when they take on Towson at 10:30 a.m. before finishing the day with North Carolina Central at 4:30 p.m.