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Eastern Michigan University

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Eagles Travel South for FGCU Tournament

EMU softball heads to Ft. Myers, Fla. for five games

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EAGLES FLY SOUTH FOR THE WINTER: The Eagles will continue their 26-game road stint as they head to Fort Myers, Fla. for the FGCU Tournament, Friday, Feb. 21 - Sunday, Feb. 23. The Green and White will play five games at Florida Gulf Coast. First pitch against Harvard is slated for 9 a.m., Friday, Feb. 21 before taking on Arkansas at 11:15 a.m. The Green and White will play both Villanova and North Dakota on day two of the tournament. Game time against the Wildcats is slated for 11:15 a.m., while EMU will play its first night game of the season against UND at 6 p.m. The Eagles will play one final game Sunday, Feb. 23, when they take on host, Florida Gulf Coast at 1:30 p.m.

RICH NAMED TO ALL-TOURNAMENT TEAM: Junior pitcher Lindsay Rich was named to the USC Upstate All-Tournament Team after having a strong performance in the circle and at the plate for the Eagles, Feb. 7-8. The Perrysburg, Ohio native threw a team-high 16.1 innings, getting the start in all four contests. The junior posted a team-best 10 strikeouts, going 1-0 on the weekend.

Not only did Rich prove to be a leader in the circle, but also showed she was a threat at the plate, going 3-for-8 on the weekend for a .375 batting average that is good for third on the team. Rich drove a leadoff home run over the left center wall and lined one double through the infield against Towson (2-8-14).

GENTILE PICKS UP VICTORY IN FIRST GAME AS HEAD COACH: With the Eagles’ victory over Virginia, Feb 7., Head Coach Melissa Gentile became just the fifth coach in EMU softball history to win the first game as the coach of Eastern, the last being Eric Oakley when he served as the interim head coach during the 2010 season.
KEEPING THE STREAK ALIVE: Freshman Katy Wyman heads into the weekend tournament riding a three-game hit streak, going 2-for-3 at the plate against Virginia before tallying one hit against both Towson and N.C. Central. Wyman did not see playing time against USC Upstate, which allowed her to keep her streak alive, while junior Jenn Lucas heads into the tournament on a two-game hit streak, notching one hit in each of her last two contests.

HITTING ABOVE .300: After the first tournament of the season, Eastern has four Eagles in the starting lineup that are hitting above .300, while six members of the team hold a slugging percentage above .300. Sophomore catcher Aoife Duffy paces the EMU offense with a .500 batting average and slugging percentage after getting the start behind the plate in the final two games of the USC Upstate Tournament. Freshmen Meagan Winkelseth and Katy Wyman join Duffy in the over .300 club after the collegiate debuts. Winkelseth is hitting at a .400 clip, while Wyman is hitting .364 and currently holds a three-game hitting streak.

Junior Lindsay Rich proved she could do it all at the USC Upstate Tournament pitching in all four games as well as ranking third on the team with a .375 batting average with three hits, including one double and the teams lone home run. Senior Lindsay Smith and junior Jenn Lucas are hitting just under .300 but their slugging percentages have been right on pace with the top of the lineup. Smith has a .333 slugging percentage and a .308 on-base percentage, while Lucas has notched a .308 slugging percentage for the Eagles.

FORCING ERRORS ON THE BASEPATH: Although the Eagles did not tally an RBI in their first game against Virginia, the Green and White was able to pull out a victory by forcing Cavalier miscues. Eastern pushed two runs across the plate on two wild pitches and scored its third run on a passed ball. EMU put runners in scoring position when its aggressive base running forced the ‘Hoos to make throwing errors, loading the bases for Eastern and allowing it to take the 3-1 victory in its first contest of the 2014 season.

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.

OUTFIELDING THE OPPOSITION: Eastern has struggled to put runs up on the board, but where it has shined in its first four games of the season has been its defense. The Eagles boast a .984 fielding percentage compared to a .957 fielding percentage put up by their opponents. The Green and White has committed just two errors on 122 chances while the opposition has had five miscues on 115 chances.

The Eagles’ fielding percentage sits at second in the Mid-American Conference, while Akron holds a league-high .994 fielding percentage.

#timetoshine: Eastern softball will have a team motto of #timetoshine for the 2014 season, which will represent the team’s high goals on the field and in the classroom. Fans can follow EMU softball on Twitter at @EMUSB and use the hashtag #timetoshine to join in on conversation. Fans can also follow Eastern softball online at EMUEagles.com for up to date news, live results and upcoming events.

SCOUTING HARVARD: Coming off a 22-22 season, the Crimson will have a challenging non-conference schedule and look to capture its third Ivy League title in the last four seasons. Harvard returns its top four hitters from a season ago with seniors Shelbi Olson and Kasey Lange set to lead the Crimson in one final season donning a Harvard uniform. Olson capped off her junior season with a team-high .371 batting average which included 49 hits, 25 runs and a .403 on-base percentage, while Lange posted a .346 batting average with a team-high 13 doubles and 13 home runs. Lange boasted a team-best .756 slugging percentage to go along with 43 RBI which was also good for a team-high.

Emily Gusse and Katherine Lantz return to the Crimson lineup after knocking in 24 RBI last season, while Zoe Galindo’s speed returns for her sophomore season after she had four triples and eight stolen bases in her freshman campaign. Harvard returns five of its six hitters with batting averages over .300 in the 2013 season, including Andrea
Del Conte, who hit at a .333 clip, that ranked third on the team.

The Crimson returns sophomore pitcher Morgan Groom, who had a team-best 2.58 ERA in her freshman campaign. Groom posted a 9-10 overall record in 125 innings of work with 96 strikeouts. The sophomore also pitched nine complete games in her first season for Harvard with batters posting a .219 batting average against her. Gabrielle Ruiz will be the only other returning hurler, throwing 61.1 innings with a 4-4 record and 11 starts last season. Harvard will bring in one freshman thrower for the 2014 season in Taylor Cabe, who posted a 29-1 record and a 0.48 ERA in her senior season at Boiling Springs.

This year's contest will be the third time Eastern and Harvard have met on the dirt with EMU holding a 2-0 record over the Crimson. The Green and White defeated Harvard, 3-1, at the FAU Tournament March 2, 2013. Amanda Stanton went 2-for-2 at the dish, while DelConte added two hits for Harvard.

A LOOK AT ARKANSAS: The Razorbacks post a 7-3 overall record on the season, competing in both the UNLV Sportco Kick-Off Classic and the Arkansas Invitational. Arkansas traveled to Las Vegas, Nev. taking on five West Coast teams at the UNLV Tournament, Feb. 7-9, going 2-3 in its first tournament of the season. The Razorbacks returned to Arkansas to host their own tournament where they swept all five games, three of which the mercy rule went into effect.

Arkansas received 28 votes in the USA/Today NFCA Preseason Poll and was just three spots shy of the top-25, while junior utility player Devon Wallace was placed on the 2014 USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year Watch List. Wallace led the NCAA with a .627 on-base percentage and 79 walks, finishing her 2013 sophomore season as an NFCA All-South Region selection. This season, the junior utility player has started all 10 games for the Razorback and posts a .333 batting average with six hits, including two doubles and three RBI. As a team, Arkansas is batting .301 on the season and keeping opponents to a .235 batting average. Jayme Gee is leading the offensive strike for the Razorbacks with a .500 batting average with five RBI. Four Arkansas players have had multiple home runs this season, including Kasey Fagan and Parker Pocklington who have each driven three over the wall and combine for 24 of the team's 61 RBI. Grace Moll and Kimmy Beasley have been consistent starters in the circle for the Razorbacks with Moll posting a 3-1 record and throwing two complete games, while Beasley is 2-2 with two complete games in the book. Moll has kept opponents to just a .178 batting average in 21.0 innings pitched, while Beasley, the left handed hurler, has thrown 19.2 innings and struck out a team-high 27 batters.

Friday's contest will be the second time Eastern and Arkansas have met up on the field, with the Razorbacks holding the one-game advantage. Arkansas defeated EMU 6-1, March 5, 2000.

VILLANOVA AT A GLANCE: The Wildcats will sport a young roster in the 2014 season with 16 underclassmen and only three seniors. Villanova posted a 21-31 overall record in the 2013 season and returns senior Ali Lowe and sophomore ace pitcher Kate Poppe for the 2014 campaign.

Lowe, the four-year starting shortstop for the Wildcats, had a team-high 26 runs last season and three triples, while also posting a .304 batting average with six doubles, 14 RBI and one home run. Shea Palmer will also look to make an impact in the lineup this season after scoring 25 runs in her freshman year with a team-high seven swipes and a .296 batting average.

After an outstanding freshman campaign in which Poppe set the single season record for innings pitched (237.2), the right-handed hurler looks to have a huge sophomore season for the Wildcats. Poppe had all but 19 of Villanova's 21 wins with a 2.56 ERA, which included 20 complete games, five shutouts and 256 strikeouts. Along with all her other accomplishments, Poppe became just the ninth Wildcat in school history to throw a no-hitter and had 20 strikeouts against Lafayette a season ago.

This will be the seventh meeting between EMU and Villanova, with the Eagles holding a 4-2 advantage over the Wildcats. Eastern took home the 3-2 victory the last time the two programs met on the field, Feb. 28, 2010.

PREVIEW OF NORTH DAKOTA: The Bison recorded a 10-30 record in 2013 and return top hitter D Jantzer to the lineup for one final season. Jantzer hit at a .308 clip and was one of just two North Dakota players to hit at .300 or
better during the 2013 season, knocking in a team-high 19 RBI with two home runs and two doubles. UND was
picked to finish last in the Big Sky Preseason Poll, which came out earlier this month after posting a 2-10 conference
record in 2013.

The Bison also return Caralyn Chewning to the lineup after she was plagued with injuries in the 2013 season.
Chewning will serve as the ace pitcher as well as the designated player when she is not in the circle. Last season,
Chewning made 15 appearances with 10 starts, posting a 3-6 overall record with a 4.85 ERA. At the plate, Chewning
hit for a .297 clip with six doubles and tied for second on the team with 17 RBI.

This will be the first meeting between Eastern Michigan and North Dakota.

**SCOUTING FLORIDA GULF COAST:** FGCU went 36-18 in the 2013 season and was picked to finish second in the
Atlantic Sun in the 2014 season, while senior catcher Chelsea Zgrabik was tabbed Preseason Player of the Year for
the second consecutive season.

The Eagles got out to their best start in program history going 6-0 before Florida International got the best of them
in their seventh contest of the season. Florida Gulf Coast has had a hard time getting back on track since dropping
their first contest, falling to a 6-4-1 overall record thus far in the 2014 season.

Freshman Tori Van Camp paces the FGCU squad going 2-for-3 at the plate in pinch-hitting at-bats while junior
Kelsey Carpenter is boasting a .533 batting average with a team-high 16 hits and 11 RBI. The junior outfielder and
Jessica Barnes have each tallied three home runs this year, while Alexis Ross has hit two over the wall for the Eagles
and has driven in seven RBI.

Freshman Taylor Wade leads the Florida Gulf Coast pitching staff, making five appearances in the circle and
pitching one complete game. Wade holds a 1-1 record this season in 19.2 innings pitched for a team-best 2.49 ERA,
while Jackie Owen has made three starts and struck out 10 on the young season. Senior pitcher Amanda Josie has
been a leader in the circle for the young staff, hurling 22.1 innings with a team-high four starts and 12 strikeouts.

**ON DECK:** Eastern will stay in the Sunshine State when it plays 10 games in six days. The Green and White is set
to play Florida International Tuesday, Feb. 25 with first pitch of game one at 3 p.m. EMU heads back to familiar
territory, Wednesday, Feb. 26, as it takes on FGCU in two games. The first of the two games is scheduled for 2:30
p.m., while the second game will be under the lights at FGCU Softball Complex with first pitch slated for 7 p.m.

Eastern continues its stretch on the road when it plays Bethune-Cookman on back-to-back days, first taking on the
Wildcats in Daytona Beach, Feb. 27 at 3 p.m. The Eagles will then travel to Fort Myers, Fla. to participate in a second
tournament at Florida Gulf Coast, where they will run into Bethune-Cookman for a 10 a.m. showdown. The Green
and White will conclude day one of the tournament with a 2:30 p.m. game against Hofstra. On Saturday, Eastern will
take on Long Island at 12:15 p.m. before matching up against Hofstra at 7 p.m. The Eagles will conclude the
tournament, Sunday, March 2 when they square off with Long Island at 10 a.m. before heading back north.