EMU Women's Softball: Softball Ready to Kick Off MAC Slate in Ann Arbor

Eastern Michigan University
Softball Ready to Kick Off MAC Slate in Ann Arbor

The Eagles will take on two Mid-American Conference opponents at the Wilpon Complex in Ann Arbor, Mich. this weekend.

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HOME AWAY FROM HOME: Due to poor conditions at Varsity Field, the Eastern Michigan University softball team was forced to move its first four home game to the Wilpon Complex on the campus of the University of Michigan.

The Eagles open up Mid-American Conference competition against Ohio on Friday, March 28, with first pitch of game one slated for 1 p.m. Eastern will take on Akron Saturday, March 29, at 2 p.m. at the Wilpon Complex before going up against the Zips in a second MAC contest Sunday, March 30, at 1 p.m.

Admission to the games is free.

SKEETER RETURNS TO OLD STOMPING GROUNDS: Although the Eagles would have liked to return home after playing 25 games on the road, Head Coach Melissa Gentile is excited to head back to Ann Arbor, Mich. where she was a four-year letter winner for the University of Michigan softball team.

Gentile finished her tenure as the career (28) and single-season (13) home run record holder, which was held until 2004.

A co-captain in 2000, she earned All-Big Ten, All-Region and All-America honors in 1998 and was the Big Ten Conference Freshman of the Year in 1997.

Gentile participated in two Women's College World Series at Michigan, placing fifth in both 1997 and 1998 and was named to the Women's College World Series All-Tournament Team in 1997. Along with the Big Ten Freshmen of the Year honor, Gentile earned second-team All-Big Ten accolades in 1997 as well as first-team All-Big Ten and All-Region accolades as a sophomore.

OPENING UP MAC PLAY: The Eagles are looking to win their third-straight MAC opener as the team has opened up
conference play with a win the past two years. The Green and White defeated Buffalo, 13-4, in a five inning mercy rule on the road, March 30, 2011 before taking down Central Michigan, 8-4, in its conference opener, March 29, 2013. EMU is 18-14 in MAC season openers, defeating Ball State in its first season in the conference. The Eagles swept the doubleheader, April 18, 1982 and went on to a 10-8 record in their first season as a member of the league. Since its first season in the MAC, Eastern has posted 10 winning seasons as a member of the conference and took home the MAC Tournament Championship in the 2007 season, becoming the first squad in Mid-American Conference history to win the tournament championship and the West Division title.

**DAVIDSON HOLDS THE HOT BAT:** Sophomore third baseman Abby Davidson has held the hot bat as of late for Eastern, notching a team-best .302 batting average with 19 hits and five multi-hit contests this season. Davidson has roped a team-best six doubles and has been a key leader in setting up runs for EMU. The Westerville, Ohio native has notched a team-high 10 runs and has had three multi-run contests for the Green and White while scoring one in each of the Eagles' last two contests.

**SCOUTING OHIO:** The Bobcats come into their Mid-American Conference opener with a 15-13 overall record, ranking third in the East behind Akron and Kent State. Junior Adrienne Gebelle leads the Ohio offense with a .372 batting average, which includes a team-high 32 hits, eight doubles and three home runs. The junior's .372 batting average ranks fourth in the conference, while she ranks in the top-10 in four other categories which includes: Slugging percentage (.570), hits (32), total bases (49) and at-bats (86). Gebelle also boasts a .407 on-base percentage going into Friday's doubleheader, while senior infielder Alexandria Basquez is hitting at a .293 clip and has had three round trippers to tie the team high in the 2014 campaign. Freshman Madison Claytor has found her place in the lineup for the Bobcats, starting all 28 contests and notching 22 hits, including tying a team-best three home runs. As a team, Ohio is hitting .268 while ranking second in the conference in hits (199) and walks (75). The Bobcat bats also rank first in the MAC in hit by pitch (20), strikeouts (170) and sacrifice flies (9).

Sophomore right-hander Savannah Jo Dorsey (11-9) has been an anchor for the Bobcats in her second season, ranking in the top-10 in nine different pitching categories in the conference. Dorsey leads the MAC in innings pitched (116.0), strikeouts (119), looking strikeouts (34), wins (11), games finished (12) and games in relief (12), while tying for first in appearances (24) and ranking seventh in both opposition batting average (.216) and games started (12). Dorsey posts an 11-9 record in the circle this season and has allowed just 93 hits in 116.0 innings, but has allowed 12 long balls this season and walks 52 batters. Lauren McClary (3-4) has made 18 appearances in the circle for Ohio and posts a 3.98 ERA going into Friday's doubleheader. McClary has struck out 57 batters on the season, while walking just 30 in her 65.0 innings of work. **SERIES HISTORY:** The Eagles hold a 50-30 advantage over Ohio, despite splitting a doubleheader contest against the cross-divisional foe in the 2013 campaign. The Green and White will be looking to pick up its first sweep of the MAC East division leaders since the 2008 season in Friday's contest when the two teams are set to take the field. In a late season matchup a year ago, Eastern fell to Ohio, 6-5, in game one before coming back with a 6-1 victory in game two. The Green and White got off to a hot start in game two using home runs in back-to-back innings to get out to a 3-0 lead over Ohio, while a sacrifice fly in the fifth inning brought the Eagles out to a 4-0 advantage. A home run in the fifth brought Ohio within three but Eastern shut the door on the Bobcats in the seventh with a fourth Jenn Lucas RBI. Lauren Wells grabbed the win for EMU, pitching all seven innings, while the Bobcats were forced to use three pitchers to slow the Green and White bats in game two.

**AKRON AT A GLANCE:** The Zips open up conference play Friday, March 28 in Mt. Pleasant when they take on the Chippewas of Central Michigan. Akron heads into the doubleheader as the MAC East leaders with a 13-6 overall
UA has six starters hitting at .300 or above with Jessica Schneider leading the way. Schneider, a senior first baseman, boasts a .378 batting average, including 14 hits and 12 RBI. Junior lefty hitter Taryn Allmon ranks second on the team with a .358 batting average, while sophomore Shawna Mailloux posts a .328 batting average with a team-high 21 hits and has swiped a team-best 15 bases on 16 attempts, which ranks second in the conference.

As a team, the Zips are leading the MAC in two hitting categories despite ranking 12th in the league in at-bats (479), 312 behind conference leader Ball State. Akron boasts a MAC-best .404 on-base percentage and 56 stolen bases, while ranking in the top-10 in seven other categories, including batting average (.301-2nd), hit by pitch (19-2nd), sacrifice bunts (28-2nd), slugging percentage (.438-3rd), runs (111-3rd), doubles (30-5th), and walks (68-5th).

Not only have the Akron Zips been a threat at the plate, but the team boasts the best defense in the MAC with a .975 fielding percentage, behind a pitching staff that ranks fifth in the league with a 3.26 team ERA. The UA pitching staff is led by sophomore right-hander Erin Seiler has made 11 appearance for Akron with 10 starts. The sophomore hurler holds a 2.17 ERA, which ranks 10th in the MAC, while her 67.2 innings pitched rank ninth in league standings. Seiler has fanned 70 batters this season, which ranks sixth in the conference, while her 16 looking strikeout also tie for sixth. Mackenzie Conrad has made 10 appearances with six starts and a 2.57 ERA. Conrad has struck out 31 batters in her 49.0 innings on the mound.

**SERIES HISTORY:** The Eagles and Zips have met 44 times on the field, with Akron holding the 27-17 advantage over the Green and White in the all-time series.

UA and Eastern split the late season single weekend game contest last year, with EMU taking the first game, 4-3, before being shut out, 2-0, the following day, May 4, 2013- May 5, 2013.

Jenn Lucas continued to have the hot bat for the Eagles when she launched a three-run homer to give Eastern the 4-3 lead in the top of the fourth inning, while then-senior pitcher Jenna Ignowski secured her 10th victory of the season going all seven innings in the circle.

EMU saw its tournament hopes dashed in game two of the series when it was unable to push a run across the plate, tallying only four hits in the seven inning contest.

**ON DECK:** Eastern will hit the road for the 26th time this season when it heads to Valparaiso, Ind. to take on the Crusaders in a mid-week doubleheader Wednesday, April 2. First pitch of game one is slated for 3 p.m.