EMU Women's Softball: Softball Readies for First MAC Road Contests

Eastern Michigan University

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Softball Readies for First MAC Road Contests

Eastern travels to Kent, Ohio to take on the Golden Flashes Friday, April 11 before heading to Buffalo, N.Y. to take on the Bulls, April 12-13

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EASTERN HITS THE ROAD FOR MAC CONTESTS: The Eastern Michigan University softball team will travel for its first Mid-American Conference contests this season, taking on Kent State University Friday, April 11 in a doubleheader at The Diamond at Dix. First pitch of game one is slated for 1 p.m.

The Eagles will then travel to Buffalo, N.Y. to go up against the University at Buffalo in two single games, April 12-13. Game time on Saturday is set for 2 p.m., while Sunday will be a 1 p.m. start.

FINDING THE GAME AT HOME: Fans can follow along with the action from Diamond at Dix by heading to kentstatesports.com. The Golden Flashes will provide live stats and radio for game one for fans Friday, April 11. For the Eagles’ contest against the Bulls, fans can head to ubbulls.com for live stats and video provided by the Mid-American Conference.

Fans are also encouraged to follow @EMUSB on Twitter for live updates and can join in on the conversation using #timetoshine.

MAC ROAD CONTESTS: The Eagles open up Mid-American Conference road play when they travel to Kent State University and the University at Buffalo this weekend. The Green and White posts a 57-119 MAC road record since the 1998 season and a 5-11 record in its MAC road opener since the 1998 campaign. EMU last won its conference road opener when it defeated Buffalo, 13-4 in five innings, March 30, 2012.
ETCHING HER NAME IN EMU LAURELS EARLY: Freshman Michelle Kriegshauser has had the hot bat for the Eagles last week as her three doubles in game one against Valparaiso University, April 2, not only tied the 2014 NCAA single-game record but also ties for first in EMU laurels. Former Eastern standout McKenna Russ set the Green and White standard almost exactly five years prior to Kriegshauser when she notched three doubles against IPFW, April 1, 2009.

NO SOPHOMORE SLUMPS HERE: Sophomores Abby Davidson and Aoife Duffy have proven time and time again why they need to be in the lineup for the Eagles in the 2014 campaign.

Davidson has played in 32 of the Eagles’ 33 games, starting 29 at the hot corner while holding a .297 batting average which ranks second on the team. The Westerville, Ohio native has lined a team-best 27 hits, including seven doubles that rank second on the team and one home run. The sophomore third baseman heads into the weekend contests with a .407 slugging percentage and a .340 on-base percentage while being walked just five times. Through the first six Mid-American Conference contests, Davidson is hitting at a .304 clip with seven hits, three RBI and four runs for the Green and White.

After seeing an injury to freshman Taylor Wagner, Duffy got her chance behind the plate to kick off MAC play for the Eagles. The sophomore catcher has made 16 starts for EMU behind the plate and ranks fourth on the team with a .270 batting average. Since coming in as a starter, the Powell, Ohio native has grabbed five hits, including a double and a three-run homer that knotted the score at 3-3 against Central Michigan University, April 5. Duffy is hitting .364 in league games with four hits, three RBI and two runs scored, while carrying a .727 slugging percentage and a .417 on-base percentage.

BRINGING THE BATS TO CONFERENCE GAMES: Fans have seen the Eagle bats struggle this season, but since the start of Mid-American Conference contests the EMU softball team has started to show some life at the plate. Despite begging 0-6 in league play, the Eagles are hitting at a .253 clip, which is .032 better than they are hitting overall on the season (.221).

Freshman Michelle Kriegshauser has led the Green and White in conference play with her nine hits in 18 at-bats and .833 slugging percentage. Kriegshauser has driven in two RBI and scored three times for EMU, while senior Amanda Stanton and sophomore Aoife Duffy have each tallied a team-best three RBI in conference contests. Eastern has three student-athletes hitting .300 or better in conference contests as Kriegshauser is hitting a team-best .500, while Stanton (.389), Duffy (.364) and Davidson (.304) have all reached the .300 mark.

Along with the increased batting average, five of the Eagles’ nine home runs this season have come in conference contests. Five different players have tallied round tripper for the Green and White as the top four hitters have each knocked one over and Jenn Lucas grabbed her first of the season against Ohio, March 28.

SEVENTH INNING RALLIES: The Eagles may have trouble getting on the scoreboard in the first inning, but in the seventh, the bats have come to life for the EMU softball team as of late. Eastern is out-scoring opponents 15-14 in the seventh inning, including scoring five runs against Valparaiso, April 2, to rally to an 11-7 victory. The Eagles also started a comeback against Central Michigan, scoring three runs in the seventh inning, but the rally fell short as EMU dropped a 9-7 contest to the Chippewas, April 5.

SCOUTING KENT STATE: The Golden Flashes come into the Friday doubleheader with a 16-14 overall record and a 2-2 record in Mid-American Conference play. Most recently, Kent State swept Akron, April 5, after a doubleheader against Ohio was cancelled.

Outside of conference action, KSU has played a rigorous schedule taking on three ranked opponents in the University of Michigan, the University of Kentucky and the University of Georgia. The Golden Flashes came away with one victory, defeating then-No. 5 Kentucky, 3-0, at the FAU Invitational, Feb. 22. Kent State has gone 1-7 against the three squads this season, but has been able to hang in the games with the top programs.
Freshman Maddy Grimm leads the Golden Flashes in her first collegiate season with a .319 batting average, including 10 home runs which rank second in the conference. Grimm is just one hit shy of eclipsing the 30-hit mark, while she has tallied five doubles, two triples and a team-best 35 RBI this year. Junior Kim Kirkpatrick is hovering right around the .300 batting average with a .295 and a .526 slugging percentage. The lefty outfielder has knocked in 10 RBI on the season, while Abbey Ledford ranks second on the team with 11 RBI and three homers. As a team, Kent State has hit 23 home runs, which ranks third in conference standings, with four players notching multiple round trippers.

The KSU pitching staff is led by junior right-hander Emma Johnson who has made 16 appearances and 14 starts in the circle this year. Johnson holds a team-best 2.31 ERA, throwing 91 innings and seven complete games, while her 100 strikeouts ranks fourth in league standings.

SERIES HISTORY: Kent State leads the all-time series against Eastern Michigan, 46-30, after sweeping the doubleheader in 2013. The Eagles will be looking for their first win over the Golden Flashes since April 1, 2012 when the Green and White defeated KSU, 7-4, in Kent, Ohio.

In game one last season, Emma Johnson of Kent State picked up the 4-3 victory, pitching all seven innings for KSU. Amanda Herron led the EMU bats with two hits and one RBI in three at-bats, while Kim Kirkpatrick notched three hits and one RBI for the Golden Flashes. In game two, the Eagles were unable to get anything going offensively, tallying just four hits in the seven inning contest.

BUFFALO AT A GLANCE: The Bulls have a 16-15 overall record and a 1-1 record in MAC play coming into the weekend. The University at Buffalo had its first weekend of league contests cancelled before being unable to play at Akron due to inclement weather, April 4.

The Bulls split their doubleheader against MAC East leader Ohio as senior Tori Speckman was named MAC East Co-Pitcher of the Week after keeping the powerful Bobcat bats at bay. Speckman tossed just the third no-hitter in school history en route to the Bulls 4-0 victory over Ohio.

Buffalo is led by junior Karly Nevez at the plate as she holds a .338 batting average with 26 hits and six RBI. Both Holly Luciano and Alexis Curtiss are hitting above .300 for the Bulls with .319 and .302 batting averages, respectively. Luciano has swiped a team-best eight bases on the season, while Nevez has stolen six of the Bulls’ 29 team bases. Senior Sammi Gallardo has proven to have power for Buffalo this season, notching five home runs which ties for sixth in the conference. As a team, the Buffalo offense is hitting at a .259 clip, while keeping its opposition to a .235 batting average.

Speckman has been the anchor in the UB pitching staff, making 22 appearances and 21 starts with 14 complete games. The senior right-hander has thrown 131.1 innings with 143 strikeouts, which ranks third in the conference. Speckman has kept batters at a .223 batting average, while Hayley Barrow holds the conference standard with a .172 opposing batting average in her three appearances.

LAST TIME AGAINST THE BULLS: Eastern holds the 11-6 advantage in the all-time series over Buffalo. Last season, the Bulls swept the Green and White, April 6-7, 2013, at Varsity Field. In EMU’s last trip to New York, the Eagles swept the Bulls, March 30, 2012, coming away with a 13-4 mercy in game one of the doubleheader.

Game one in the 2013 season was an offensive strike from both teams as Buffalo out-hit the Eagles 14-11 to come away with the 8-7 victory. Four EMU players grabbed two hits, while Abby Davidson brought in two RBI on her two hits, and Amanda Stanton had one RBI and two hits. Both squads used three pitchers in the seven-inning contest with each pitcher giving up at least three hits against the opposition. In game two, the Green and White was unable to keep up with the Bulls hitting, tallying just five hits compared to UB’s 10. Speckman grabbed the win for the Bulls, while Lauren Wells suffered her 10th loss of the season coming on in relief for four innings.

ON DECK: Eastern will return to Ypsilanti, Mich. for its final four conference home games of the 2014 season. The
Eagles are set to take on Western Michigan Friday, April 18 in a doubleheader starting at 1 p.m. before going up against Northern Illinois April 19-20 in single games.