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Eastern Michigan University

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Softball Kicks Off 2015 Season at Texas A&M Tournament

The Eagles will make the trek to College Station, Texas to play five games to kick off the 2015 season.

EAGLES READY TO START 2015 CAMPAIGN: The Eastern Michigan University softball team is eager to kick off its 2015 campaign, hitting the road for five games in the Lone Star State, Feb. 13-15. EMU will travel to College Station, Texas to participate in the 2015 Texas A&M Tournament. The Green and White will play two games against both Missouri State and Texas A&M before closing out the tournament with a contest against Penn State. First pitch of the 2015 season is slated for 10 a.m. Friday, Feb. 13 against Missouri State.

ALL-TIME AGAINST WEEKEND OPPONENTS: The Eagles will meet both Missouri State and Texas A&M for the first time this week, but it will mark the fifth time that Penn State and EMU have battled on the field. However, Eastern and the Nittany Lions have not met on the dirt since the 1998 season when Penn State mercied the Eagles, 8-0, Mar. 13, 1998.

EAGLES FINISH 2014 SEASON WITH FIFTH-HIGHEST GPA IN THE NATION: The Eastern Michigan University softball team capped off the 2013-14 season finishing fifth in the nation in team grade point average for NCAA Division I institutions, announced by the National Fastpitch Coaches Association (NFCA). The Eagles rounded out the top five with a 3.585 team GPA in 2013-14.

FINDING SPOTS IN THE RECORD BOOK: The 2014 edition of the Eagles climbed the charts in the individual
season records as well as in the individual game records, individual career records, and team records. The Green and White found itself tied for third in single game doubles, driving five two-baggers at Valparaiso, Apr. 2, 2014. The Valpo game also served as a record game for then-freshman Michelle Kriegshauser who knocked three doubles to tie for the 2014 NCAA single-game record as well as tie the individual game record at Eastern Michigan. The three doubles tied EMU career leader McKenna Russ, who had notched three double against IPFW, Apr. 1, 2009.

Kriegshauser also ties for fourth with 13 doubles in the 2014 season, while Lindsay Rich finished fifth in pitching appearances with 38. Along with ranking in the individual season records, Rich is quickly climbing the career pitching charts, ranking third in games (109), 11th in strikeouts (208), and 12th in innings pitched (346.2).

KRIEGSHAUSER POSTS BREAK OUT FRESHMEN SEASON: In her first season donning the Green and White, Michelle Kriegshauser posted a .270 batting average that ranked second on the team, while her 33 hits tied for third. The starting right fielder tallied 13 doubles, one triple and three home runs while driving in 13 RBI on the season. Kriegshauser led the Eagle offense in slugging percentage (.467) and doubles (13), while ranking second in batting average (.270) and total bases (57). The freshman outfielder tied for the 2014 NCAA single-game record after notching three doubles against Valparaiso University, April 2. Since then, Kriegshauser tacked on seven more doubles and ranked eighth in the nation and third in the Mid-American Conference with 0.39 doubles per game.

In conference play, Kriegshauser finished her freshman season with a team-best .333 batting average that included 21 hits, eight doubles, two home runs and six RBI. The New Lenox, Ill. native boasted a .556 slugging percentage and a .373 on-base percentage in her first season donning the Green and White, while tallying 16 putouts and one assist with no errors.

Kriegshauser's best week came when the then-freshman went 9-for-13 at the plate with a .692 batting average for the week ending April 6. The right fielder had her second perfect day at the plate going 3-for-3 against Valpo, while also tallying three hits in game two against the Crusaders. Kriegshauser grabbed three hits between the Eagles' two games against Central Michigan, including two doubles, and held a 1.077 slugging percentage on the week along with a .733 on-base percentage.

For her effort, Kriegshauser earned a spot on the Mid-American Conference All-Freshman team, which was voted on by the league's head coaches.

SIZING UP MISSOURI STATE: The Bears return nine letterwinners and five starters after finishing 28-27 in the 2014 campaign and making an appearance in the MVC Tournament Quarterfinals. Missouri State sees the return of its ace pitcher in sophomore Erin Stuemph, who was tabbed as a preseason All-MVC Team honoree after make 42 appearances and 22 starts in 2014. Stuemph posted a team-best 3.35 ERA in 158.2 innings with 10 complete games and 155 strikeouts. Joining Stuemph in the infield is junior Brittany Sullinger who notched a .317 batting average with 41 hits and one assist with no errors.

Stuemph's best week came when the junior pitched a 1.077 ERA in 15.1 innings with 14 strikeouts and zero walks. The Bears are hitting at a .286 clip with three players hitting .500 or better five games into the season. In the circle, Missouri State has used four pitchers with Chelsea Jones securing two wins for the Bears.

A QUICK GLANCE AT No. 24 TEXAS A&M: The Aggies hope to pick up right where they left off in the 2014 campaign after making an appearance in the NCAA Regional and posting a 37-22 overall record. Texas A&M returns 13 letterwinners and five starters as well as four pitchers for the 2015 season.

The Aggies lost four of their top five hitters from a season ago, but return April Ryan who hit .295 with 52 hits and a team-best 14 doubles and three triples. Despite losing some of its offensive power, A&M's veteran pitchers Katie Marks and Rachel Fox will be the leaders of the defense in the 2015 campaign. The junior-senior duo combined for 30 wins with 15 victories apiece, while Fox tossed 11 complete games and Marks threw eight. Coming in for relief for the Aggies is sophomore Abby Donnell, who secured six saves in the 2014 season and threw 69.1 inning. Fox pitched a team-high 158.1 innings with 123 strikeouts, while Marks threw 131.0 innings with 73 strikeouts.

The Aggies traveled to Los Angeles, Calif. to begin their 2015 season at the SoCal Collegiate Classic where they went 3-2, falling to No. 6 UCLA and Purdue. After falling to the Bruins, A&M came back to take a 6-4 victory from UCLA before falling to Purdue, 1-0 on the final day of the tournament.

SCOUTING PENN STATE: The Nittany Lions hope to get back on track in the 2015 season after posting a 14-35 overall record and a 5-18 record in Big Ten play. Penn State's top hitter Lexi Kneif returns for her third season after notching 58 hits, a .513 slugging percentage, and a .446 on-base percentage. Junior Macy Jones is the Nittany Lions return leader in RBI with 22 in the 2014 season as well as knocking four triples and three home runs for Penn State.

After emerging as a leader in the circle in her freshman season, Marlaina Laubach made a team-high 30 appearances with 24 starts in the 2014 campaign, including 15 complete games and 148.0 innings for the Lions. Jones, who was also PSU's RBI leader, made 19 appearances and 11 starts with 41 strikeouts, while junior Christy
Von Pusch made 22 appearances in the 2014 season.

The Nittany Lions started off the 2015 season with three-straight wins at the Florida Atlantic "Kick Off" Tournament before falling to Kansas and host Florida Atlantic on the final day of the classic, Feb. 6-8. As a team, Penn State holds a .248 batting average, while opponents are hitting .252.

**EAGLES WELCOME NEW ADDITIONS:** Head Coach Melissa Gentile brings in six newcomers for the 2015 season which includes: three infielders, one outfielder, one catcher, and one pitcher.

Middle infielders Brandice Olmos and Haley Hostetler will immediately fill the gaps at shortstop and second base for the Green and White, while Carleigh Herrington looks to find time at first base in 2015.

Left-handed catcher Camri Grace hopes to see some playing time behind the plate and as a designated hitter in the 2015 season, while Trisha Trujillo will make an immediate impact in the circle for the Green and White pitching staff. Finally, Angel Schilke will see time in the outfield for the Green and White.

**EASTERN PICKED SIXTH IN THE WEST:** The 2015 Eastern Michigan University softball team has been selected to finish sixth in the Mid-American Conference West Division as the conference released its preseason coaches' poll Tuesday, Feb. 3. Defending MAC Tournament Champions Ohio University topped the standings as the favorite to win the East Division as well as the conference tournament, while Central Michigan was picked to top the West Division in the 2015 season.

Following Central Michigan in the West Division are the Ball State Cardinals with five first-place votes and the Northern Illinois Huskies with one first-place vote, while Western Michigan, Toledo, and Eastern round out the division. In the East, Kent State was picked to finish second with Akron, Buffalo, Miami, and Bowling Green closing out the list for the 2015 campaign. The Bobcats have been tabbed the favorite to claim the MAC Tournament Championship after winning the tournament in 2014 and receiving a berth into the NCAA Tournament.

**SENIOR LEADERS:** Eastern looks to two seniors to guide the team in its second season under Head Coach Melissa Gentile. This senior class will be able to lead from all aspects of the game as the class is composed of outfielder Jenn Lucas and pitcher/first baseman Lindsay Rich.

Lucas and Rich were constant starters for the Green and White infield in the 2014 season, but this year Lucas will make the transition back to the outfield, while Rich will lead a young pitching staff.

Making her return to the outfield, Lucas also hopes to be a spark in the grass this season after starting two seasons in the outfield prior to moving to second base for the 2014 season. The senior hit .209 with 31 hits, including nine doubles and 12 RBI.

Rich looks to cap off her final campaign donning the Green and White in fashion after rising to the top of the Eagle arsenal in the 2014 season. Rich not only led the team in all pitching categories but also became a threat at the plate as well. The right-handed hurler made 38 appearances in the circle, while tossing 143.3 innings and striking out 84 batters for the Green and White.

**CONFERENCE TOUR:** Eastern will see a slew of representatives from several different conferences this season, taking on opponents from 17 leagues in 2015. The Green and White will square off against teams from the Atlantic Coast (Notre Dame), America East (UMASS-Lowell and Stony Brook), Atlantic Sun (Florida Gulf Coast), Big East (Villanova), Big Ten (Illinois, Michigan, Michigan State, and Penn State), Big 12 (Kansas), Big Sky (North Dakota), Horizon (Detroit, Oakland, and Youngstown State), Ivy League (Columbia), Metro Atlantic Athletic (Siena College), Missouri Valley (Missouri State), Northeast (Robert Morris), Patriot (Holy Cross), Southeastern (Texas A&M), Southland (Central Arkansas), Sun Belt (Georgia State), and Western Athletic (UMKC).

**ON DECK:** Eastern Michigan softball will host the first ever EMU Maderia Beach Spring Invitational Feb. 20-22 in Madeira Beach, Fla. The Eagles will first take on North Dakota Friday, Feb. 20 at 1:30 p.m. before concluding the day with Robert Morris at 4 p.m.