
little east conference

Saturday, May 9, 2009

EASTERN THREATENS, BUT CAN'T PRODUCE IN NCAA TOURNEY LOSS

Warriors collect eight hits but strand ten; bow out in 3-1 softball loss to Rowan

MAHWAH, N.J. – Ten baserunners translated into only one run for the fifth-seeded Eastern Connecticut State University softball team, which bowed out of the NCAA Division III Mahway, N.J. Regional Saturday in a 3-1 loss to third-seeded Rowan University.

Eastern (26-13) scored only two runs in its two tournament losses, sandwiching a 4-1 loss to fourth-seeded Moravian College and Saturday's loss to Rowan (34-11) around a 7-0 rout of eighth-seeded College of Staten Island. Rowan, which lost in the New Jersey Athletic Conference tournament championship round, is one of three remaining teams. The Professors shut out sixth-seeded Farmingdale State later Saturday to move into the losers' bracket final Sunday morning against William Paterson University.

Eastern threatened in every inning – putting runners on in five of the first six innings – before finally breaking through in the bottom of the seventh by scoring its only run on a one-out double by freshman leadoff hitter **Priscilla Alicea (Stratford)** and an RBI opposite-field single by sophomore leftfielder **Katie Dinihanian (Stratford)**. The Warriors out-hit Rowan, 8-4.

Alicea and Dinihanian led off the Warriors' first inning by reaching safely but were left stranded by winning pitcher Jackie Sasko (20-5). With Eastern trailing 2-0 in the fourth, junior shortstop **Kim Church (Farmington)** and junior centerfielder **Ashley Sullivan (Trumbull)** reached safely to open the inning and were sacrificed into scoring position by sophomore DP **Rachel Soychak (Mahopace, NY)**. Sasko got two ground balls to escape.

Trailing 3-0, the Warriors brought the tying run to the plate when Church and senior second baseman **Kelly Finlay (Thomaston)** singled, but relief pitcher Amanda Singer ended the threat by inducing a foul fly to left.

(more)

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Eastern freshman righty **Molly Rathbun (Hebron)** and senior righty **Katie Pensiero (Stamford)** combined on a four-hitter but walked seven, with three of the walks coming around to account for all three of the Professors' runs.

With a double and single and two walks, Alicea reached safely in all four of her plate appearances, with Church reaching three times with two singles and a walk. Dinihanian also had two hits.

In three tournament games, Alicea had five hits and three walks, and finished the season with her second six-game hitting streak of the year. She batted a team-leading .625 with a .727 on-base percentage and .750 slugging percentage in the tournament. Finlay was 4-for-8, and senior first baseman Rachel Denny (East Haddam) 4-for-10. As a team, Eastern committed only one error, but its opponents was perfect.

Alicea led Eastern on the season with a .448 batting average, .677 slugging percentage, .530 on-base percentage, and with 21 stolen bases and 17 walks. Her batting average was only 11 percentage points shy of the season record.

Rathbun won 16 and lost 7 on the mound with a 0.79 ERA and 206 strikeouts in 159 1/3 innings. She became only the second pitcher in program history to fan as many as 200 batters in a season.

Friday, May 8, 2009

BEHIND PENSIERO, EASTERN SOFTBALL ALIVE IN NCAA TOURNEY

Senior tosses three-hit shutout; Denny drives in four runs in 7-0 win over CSI

MAHWAH, N.J. -- Senior **Katie Pensiero (Stamford)** fired a three-hit shutout and senior **Rachel Denny (East Haddam)** drove in four runs with two hits to help the Eastern Connecticut State University softball team stave off elimination in NCAA Division III Regional play with a 7-0 win over the College of Staten Island Friday morning at Ramapo College.

Fifth-seeded Eastern (26-12) advances in the losers' bracket to face third-seeded Rowan University (33-11), which dropped a 2-1 decision later Friday to second-seeded William Paterson University.

Six teams remain in the original eight-team double-elimination tournament. The Warriors eliminated No. 8 Staten Island (23-14), while No. 6 Farmingdale State College knocked out No. 7 Muhlenberg College, 4-1, Friday afternoon. In a winners' bracket game Friday, top-seeded Messiah College blanked No. 4 Moravian College, 3-0. Messiah and William Paterson are the tournament's only unbeaten.

Pensiero (8-2) spaced three singles while fanning three and walking three en route to her third complete-game shutout (she has also combined on three shutouts) in 13 starts. She had a no-hitter through three before Joanna Tepedino singled with two out in the fourth.

Denny's second home run of the season -- career-leading 21st of her career -- staked Eastern to a 2-0 lead in the third and Pensiero nursed that lead until the Warriors exploded for fifth runs in the sixth on four hits, two walks and a hit-by-pitch. Junior **Nikki Mustin (Canterbury)** was hit by a pitch to force in the first run, freshman leadoff hitter **Priscilla Alicea (Stratford)** made it 5-0 with a two-run single, and Denny completed the scoring with a two-run single.

Two Staten Island pitchers gave up only six hits but walked seven batters and hit one.

In addition to her two-run single, Alicea walked twice and stole her team-leading 21st base of the season. Alicea also leads the team in batting (.430), slugging (.656), walks (16) runs (28), and hits (40). The multiple-RBI game was the seventh this year for Denny, the season and career RBI leader.

little east conference

Thursday, May 7, 2009

WITH OPENING LOSS, EASTERN SOFTBALL IN NCAA LOSERS' BRACKET

Fifth-seeded Warriors play perfect defense but drop 4-1 decision to No. 5 Moravian

MAHWAH, N.J. – Jenna Carmon of Moravian outdueled **Molly Rathbun (Hebron)** in a battle of right-handed starting freshman pitchers that dropped the Eastern Connecticut State University softball team into the losers' bracket of the NCAA Division III Mahwah, N.J. Regional Thursday with a 4-1 opening-game setback.

Fourth-seeded Moravian (35-9), which reached the 2004 national championship round, scored single runs in the second and third innings by collecting four of its seven game hits and added two insurance runs in the bottom of the fifth after Eastern (25-12) scraped together its only run of the game in the top of the inning.

The start of the game was delayed for two hours and 15 minutes due to rain and wet field conditions.

Eastern looks to remain alive in the eight-team, double-elimination tournament when it faces first-time opponent and eighth-seeded College of Staten Island (23-13) at 10 a.m. The Dolphins were dispatched by No. 1 seed Messiah College in Thursday's opening game, 4-0.

Slowed by shin splints recently, Rathbun worked the first six innings (the first game she did not complete in 20 starts), giving up all seven Greyhound hits and all four runs, including a solo home run by No. 3 hitter Maria DeBonis that give Moravian a 2-0 lead in the third, and a two-out, two-run double by No. 4 hitter Sheri Bieniek in the bottom of the fifth that made it 4-1. Rathbun fanned only one and walked one.

Trailing 2-0, Eastern scratched together its only run off Carmon (14-1) in the top of the fifth when senior third baseman **Courtney Caswell (Wakefield, RI)** scored on the front end of a double steal. Caswell had singled with one out, was sacrificed to second by senior second baseman **Kelly Finlay (Thomaston)** and to third on a single by leadoff hitter **Priscilla Alicea (Stratford)**. Alicea was credited with her 20th stolen base of the season in the inning.

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Eastern had four runners reach second base in the game without scoring. In the third, Finlay had a one-out single and moved to second on a two-out single by sophomore leftfielder **Katie Dinihanian (Stratford)** before an inning-ending fly ball. In the fourth, Rathbun singled to lead off the inning but her pinch runner was caught off second after being sacrificed to second by junior centerfielder **Ashley Sullivan (Trumbull)**. Alicea was also left on second in Eastern's one-run fifth, and pinch runner **Michelle Lawlor (Brookline, MA)** was left at second after moving into scoring position with two out in the sixth.

With Eastern trailing 1-0 in the third and two runners aboard, senior first baseman **Rachel Denny (East Haddam)** flied out to deep right-center field for the final out. Denny, the program's all-time home run leader, was the only Eastern player with more than one hit. She singled with two out in the first and singled to lead off the sixth.

For the 17th time this year, Eastern played perfect defense, with Rathbun, Caswell and junior shortstop **Kim Church (Farmington)** combining for ten assists.

A year ago, the Warriors won two games after an opening loss before being eliminated in the SUNY Plattsburgh regional.

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little east conference

Friday, May 1, 2009

EASTERN SOFTBALL EXITS LITTLE EAST TOURNAMENT

Top-seeded Rhode Island scores four unearned runs in sixth to eliminate Warriors

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – For the second straight game, third-seeded Eastern Connecticut State University's opponent scored all four of its runs in one inning as the Warriors were eliminated from the 2009 Little East Conference softball tournament in a 4-2 loss to top-seeded Rhode Island College Friday morning at Dayna A. Bazar Stadium on the Rhode Island.

A loser of five of its last eight games, Eastern (25-11) awaits a possible at-large bid to the NCAA Division III Tournament when invitations are extended Monday. Three-time defending champion Rhode Island (38-4) was scheduled to play a winners' bracket game Friday at 4:30 p.m. against fourth-seeded Western Connecticut State University. Western scored all four of its runs in the third inning of its 4-3 win over Eastern in Thursday's opening game.

As it did against Western, Eastern watched a 1-0 lead disappear against Rhode Island College. The Anchorwomen, who edged Eastern by scores of 2-1 and 6-4 this past Saturday, scored four unearned runs in the sixth inning Friday on three hits, a walk and infield error. Number 9 hitter Donielle Mattoon drove in the first run with a two-out single and three runs scored on a bases-loaded single to center by leadoff hitter Amanda Perry.

Eastern freshman leadoff hitter **Priscilla Alicea (Stratford)** recorded two of Eastern's six hits against complete-game winner Amanda Berard (13-3). Alicea improved her team-high batting average to .432 by doubling and scoring in the fourth to give Eastern a 1-0 lead, and hitting a leadoff home run in the sixth -- her first collegiate home run -- to pull Eastern to within 4-2. Eastern threatened for more runs in the sixth on base knocks by sophomore **Katie Dinihanian (Stratford)** and freshman pitcher **Molly Rathbun (Hebron)**, but a double play started by Mattoon at short helped Berard escape. A two-out walk in the seventh brought the tying run to the plate, but Berard got an infield pop to Mattoon to end the game.

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Rathbun (16-5) gave up seven hits while fanning eight and walking three. Through the first five innings, she limited the Anchorwomen to four hits and struck out six. Rathbun's seventh strikeout of the game made her only the second pitcher in program history to strike out as many as 200 batters in a season. Until Friday, only All-America Kim Durocher had fanned 200 in a season. She struck out 245 as a sophomore in 1986 in leading the Warriors to their fourth national championship in six years.

In two Little East Conference tournament losses, Eastern collected only one less hit than its opponents and Rathbun allowed only three earned runs and 14 hits (12 singles) for a 1.50 ERA in 14 innings. She struck out 14 and walked seven. Alicea had four of Eastern's 13 tournament hits and scored three of its five runs. Three Eastern errors, however, led to five unearned runs by Western and Rhode Island.

In the team's three losses to Rhode Island this year, Rathun was 0-2 with a 0.45 ERA, 21 strikeouts and six walks. Alicea was 6-for-9 in those three games with two doubles and a home run and two stolen bases. Dinihanian and junior **Kim Church (Farmington)** each had three hits and senior **Rachel Denny (East Haddam)** drove in three runs.

Rhode Island College 4, Eastern Conn. 2

Rhode Island (38-4)	000	004	0	--	4	7	1
Eastern Conn. (25-11)	000	101	0	--	2	6	1

Amanda Berard (13-3) and Kayla Jandreau. Molly Rathbun (16-5) and Nikki Mustin. 2B-Michelle Perrin (R), Priscilla Alicea (E); HR-Alicea (1) (E).

Thursday, April 30, 2009

WESTERN KNOCKS OFF EASTERN SOFTBALL IN LEC OPENER, 4-3 *Freshman pitcher Dargon defeats third-seeded Warriors for second time this season*

WESTERN CONNECTICUT (22-17) defeated EASTERN CONNECTICUT (25-10) 4-3 on Thursday in the opening round of the Little East Conference softball tournament Thursday at Dayton A. Bazar Softball Complex on the campus of Rhode Island College.

Third-seeded Eastern (25-10) will play top-seeded and three-time defending tournament champion Rhode Island College Friday at 10 a.m. needing a win to stay alive in the losers' bracket. Rhode Island defeated sixth-seeded University of Southern Maine, 5-2, Thursday. Western Connecticut (22-17) faces top-seeded Plymouth State University in a winner's bracket game Friday at 10 a.m.

Leading Eastern home run pitcher, senior junior college transfer pitcher and Eastern's only double-digger, Eastern freshman Molly Rathbun (Hartford) this season, Rathbun, rated second nationally in least hits allowed per seven innings (2.76) and third in ERA (0.50), answered in the bottom of the third with a two-run home -- her team-leading fourth this year -- to tie on the Western lead to 4-3, but Dargon limited Eastern to three hits over the final four innings. Dargon had pitched a complete-game three-hitter in a 3-1 win over Eastern on April 11 after Rathbun had tossed a five-inning one-hit shutout in the opener.

Two Eastern errors led to an additional run in the late innings. With scoring time only seven minutes left in the game, Eastern pitcher Dargon pitched a wild pitch and walked two batters in seven contests.

Freshman Priscilla Micea (Stratford) reached safely three times for Eastern with a single, walk and her team-leading seventh triple -- to improve her team-leading batting average to .424. She also stole her 19th base of the year. Senior Rachel Denny (East Haddam) had two hits, including a double for Eastern. Dargon and Rathbun both allowed seven hits in eight-inning work. Dargon fanned four and walked two while Rathbun fanned six and walked three.

Eastern dropped 7-1, 0-1 decisions to Rhode Island College this past Sunday at Plymouth State.

little east conference

Tuesday, April 28, 2009

EASTERN CLOSES OUT REGULAR SEASON WITH SWEEP

Pitching holds Trinity without an earned run in 5-2, 1-0 softball victories

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. – Senior **Katie Pensiero (Stamford)** and freshman **Molly Rathbun (Hebron)** held Trinity College without an earned run and the Eastern Connecticut State University softball team scored the deciding runs in its first at-bat in both games in posting a 5-2, 1-0 non-conference doubleheader sweep of Trinity College Tuesday night at Howard Spector Field.

Rathbun (16-3) pitched a complete-game seven-hitter with nine strikeouts in the opener and Pensiero (7-2) pitched six scoreless inning in the nightcap. Rathbun returned to get the final outs in the second game to record her third saves.

Third-seeded Eastern (25-9) opens play in the six-team, double-elimination Little East Conference tournament Thursday at Rhode Island College, facing fourth-seeded Western Connecticut State University at 2 p.m. The teams split a doubleheader April 14 at Danbury.

Against Trinity, Rathbun was nicked for two unearned runs on eight hits in eight innings of work in lowering her ERA to 0.47. She struck out 11 and walked two and hit a batter. In the first game, Eastern scored three runs in the first after there were two out and none on but was held scoreless before finally adding two insurance runs in the bottom of the sixth after Trinity (14-17) pulled to within a run with two unearned runs in the top of the inning.

Trinity stranded 18 runners in the doubleheader. Ten of the LOBs came in Game 2, when it left the bases loaded in the fifth and two runners aboard in the second and third. In the fifth, the Bantams loaded the bases on two singles (one was an infield single) and a walk, but Pensiero got a strikeout on three pitches to leave the bags full.

Ranked No. 5 in New England, Eastern completed the sweep when senior **Rachel Denny (East Haddam)** drove in the only run of the game with a first-inning single that scored freshman **Priscilla Alicea (Stratford)**. Alicea led off the inning with a single, continued to second on an outfield error, and moved to third on a sacrifice bunt by sophomore **Katie Dinihanian (Stratford)**.

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Sunday, April 26, 2009

FOLLOWING LEC SPLIT, EASTERN SOFTBALL NO. 3 SEED IN PLAYOFFS

Rathbun equals collegiate high with 15 strikeouts in 2-1 first-game win over Keene

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. – Freshman **Molly Rathbun (Hebron)** struck out 15 batters for the second time in her last three starts and senior **Rachel Denny (East Haddam)** hit a game-ending tenth-inning sacrifice fly as the Eastern Connecticut State University softball team edged Keene State College, 2-1 in ten innings, in the first game of a Little East Conference doubleheader Sunday afternoon at Howard Spector Field.

In the second game, Keene State (22-12, 10-4 little east) freshman Courtney Savoie twirled a two-hit shutout as the Owls salvaged a split with a 2-0 victory that handed Eastern (23-9, 10-4 little east) its third conference loss in two days.

Later Sunday night, Keene scored three times in the bottom of the tenth inning to upend regular-season champion Rhode Island College, 9-8, in the completion of a halted game from April 10. Keene denied Rhode Island a perfect conference season with the win that also gave the Owls the No. 2 seed in the conference tournament, which will be held Thursday through Saturday at Rhode Island College. Eastern is seeded third and will face fourth-seeded Western Connecticut State University in an opening-round game at 2 p.m.

Denny's sacrifice fly in the bottom of the tenth inning scored freshman pinch runner **Rosie Manzo (Hudson, MA)** to give Eastern the Game 1 win. Keene reached Rathbun for four of its game total of five hits in taking a 1-0 lead in the fourth, but Eastern tied the first game in the bottom of the sixth with an unearned run when Denny's two-out single was booted in the outfield, allowing freshman rightfielder **Priscilla Alicea (Stratford)** to score from first.

Both teams ran into double plays in the late innings of the first game when runners were caught off the bag on routine fly balls to the respective centerfielders. Keene's running error cost them an opportunity in the top of the tenth and set the stage for Eastern's game-ending rally in the bottom of the inning. With a runner placed on second in the bottom of the tenth in accordance with tie-breaker rules, Eastern sophomore leftfielder **Katie Dinihanian (Stratford)** moved pinch runner Manzo to third with a sacrifice bunt. Two intentional walks loaded the bases for Denny. The program's career RBI leader, Denny sent the first pitch she saw from reliever Samantha Pratt to left field deep enough to send in Manzo with the winning run.

In the second game, Katie Bradford hit a two-out solo home run on a two-strike pitch to give Keene a 1-0 lead in the second, and Bradford walked and scored on an RBI single by

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No. 9 hitter Laura Chandler to make it 2-0 in the sixth. Senior **Katie Pensiero (Stamford)** lost for only the second time in eight decisions this year, recording her third complete game in 11 starts. Pensiero fanned seven and walked three and matched Rathbun by limiting Keene to only five hits.

Leading 1-0 in the second game, Keene put its first two runners aboard on errors in the fourth, but Pensiero got a swinging strikeout and line drive out to second to end the threat. Keene threatened again in the fifth but stranded runners on second and third (the Owls left nine runners on in the game) when Pensiero induced a ground ball and got an inning-ending strikeout. The Owls finally tacked on an insurance run in the sixth when Bradford scored from second on Chandler's two-out RBI single.

In the first game, Keene leadoff hitter Jenna Patnode stole her 33rd and 34th bases of the season without being caught, but was stranded at second both times.

Savoie, one of four freshman pitchers that comprise the Keene staff, pitched a complete-fanned seven and walked four in the nightcap to post her seventh win in ten decisions. Eastern stranded two runners in the first and two in the fourth in the second game.

Saturday, April 25, 2009

EASTERN SOFTBALL TRIMMED TWICE; RIC GAINS TOP SEED
Looking for a repeat of 2008, Warriors drop two close games, 2-1, 6-4

PROVIDENCE, R.I. -- The Rhode Island College softball team scored the winning run in the bottom of the seventh of the opener and wiped out a one-run Eastern Connecticut State University lead with three runs in the fourth inning of the nightcap in posting a 2-1, 6-4 Little East Conference sweep Saturday afternoon at the Dayna A. Bazar Softball Complex on the RIC campus.

A year ago, Eastern (22-8, 9-3 little east) defeated Rhode Island (34-3-1, 11-0-1 little east) twice on the final day of the regular season to pull even in the final conference standings and gain the No. 1 seed in the LEC playoffs. This time, Michelle Perrin plated No. 9 hitter Donielle Mattoon from second base with the winning run to give RIC a 2-1 win in the first game. In the nightcap, the Anchorwomen answered a three-run Eastern third inning with a three-run inning in the fourth for a 6-4 lead in clinching the top seed and at least a share of the regular-season title.

Eastern freshman pitcher **Molly Rathbun (Hebron)** and RIC sophomore pitcher Amanda Berard opposed each other as the starting pitchers in the first game, and both returned in relief in the nightcap. Berard (12-1) was credited with both wins while Rathbun (14-3) lost the opener and did not figure in the decision in the second game. Rathbun gave up only four hits and one earned run with nine strikeouts and three walks in the first game, and tossed 2 ½ shutout innings as the third of three Eastern pitchers in the second game.

Rhode Island will host the six-team, double-elimination conference tournament beginning Thursday. The Anchorwomen have won or shared the last five regular-season titles.

Trailing 3-1 in the second game, Eastern scored three times in the third inning on a three-run home run by career home run leader **Rachel Denny (East Haddam)** for a 4-3 lead – the 20th of her career -- but the hosts answered with three of their own in the fourth. Freshman **Rosie Manzo (Hudson, MA)** replaced senior **Katie Pensiero (Stamford)** to start the fourth inning in a 3-3 tie, but did not last the inning. After getting the first out, she gave up singles to four of the next five batters. Rathbun got the final out with a strikeout and closed out with two scoreless innings.

Trailing 6-4 in the nightcap, Eastern left four runners aboard over the final three innings. After Berard struck out the first two batters of the seventh, No. 9 hitter **Katie Dinihanian (Stratford)** singled and freshman outfielder **Priscilla Alicea (Stratford)** doubled before Berard stranded the tying run in scoring position by getting junior shortstop **Kim Church (Farmington)** to line out to third to end the game. Church's first home run of the year had staked Eastern to a 1-0 lead in the first inning of Game 2.

Alicea had four of Eastern's 12 hits on the day, with Dinihanian, Church and junior outfielder **Ashley Sullivan (Trumbull)** adding two each. Alicea, who also stole two bases, upped her team-leading batting average to .449.

Eastern is scheduled to play its final regular-season conference games Sunday with a 2 p.m. home doubleheader against Keene State College.

Friday, April 24, 2009

EASTERN PITCHING DOMINATES UMASS IN 2-0, 5-0 SWEEP

Three hurlers combine on three-hitter in two Little East Conference victories

NORTH DARTMOUTH, Mass. — Senior **Katie Pensiero (Stamford)** pitched a complete-game two-hit shutout in the opener and freshmen **Rosie Manzo (Hudson, MA)** and **Molly Rathbun (Hebron)** combined on a one-hit shutout in the nightcap as the Eastern Connecticut State University softball team swept the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, 2-0, 5-0 in Little East Conference action Friday afternoon at the UMD Athletic Complex.

The LEC doubleheader is the first of three scheduled doubleheaders in three days for Eastern (22-6, 9-1 little east), which visits two-time defending playoff champion Rhode Island College Saturday in a 1 p.m. twinbill in Providence before returning home to host Keene State College in a 2 p.m. makeup doubleheader with Keene State Sunday. Rhode Island leads the conference with a 9-0-1 LEC mark. The Anchorwomen visit Western Connecticut Sunday in a conference doubleheader that closes out their season. Last year, Eastern swept RIC on the final day of the regular season to earn the No. 1 seed in the conference playoffs.

Now 36-2 all-time against UMass (7-21, 2-10 little east), Eastern has won six straight this year and has swept four of five conference doubleheaders.

Pensiero (6-1) won her 27th career game in the opener, allowing only two singles while striking out four and walking one. Manzo (2-2) allowed only one hit in six innings of the second game before Rathbun fanned two in a 1-2-3 seventh as the duo faced only two batters over the minimum 21 over seven innings. Neither second-game pitcher walked a batter. After giving up a two-out single in the first inning, Manzo retired 14 straight before hitting the leadoff batter in the sixth.

Freshman rightfielder **Priscilla Alicea (Stratford)**, last week's LEC Rookie-of-the-Week, reached base seven times and stole three bases in the doubleheader to improve her batting average to .429. Alicea had three singles and four walks and scored two runs. Junior centerfielder **Ashley Sullivan (Trumbull)** also had three hits, drove in two runs, and stole two bases. Senior first baseman **Rachel Denny (East Haddam)** reached four times with a single and three walks and scored two runs.

Eastern played perfect defense in each game, marking its 18 straight game of one or no errors. The Warriors have committed only one error in its last five games.

Saturday, April 18, 2009

WITH SWEEP OF USM, EASTERN SOFTBALL NOW 14-2 UP NORTH

Sullivan has four hits and four RBI; Rathbun strikes out 15 in opening game

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. – Junior **Ashley Sullivan (Trumbull)** had four hits and drove in four runs and freshman right-hander **Molly Rathbun (Hebron)** struck out a career-high 15 en route to her third consecutive complete-game shutout as the Eastern Connecticut State University softball team recorded a 2-0, 9-0 Little East Conference sweep of the University of Southern Maine Saturday afternoon at Howard Spector Field. The second game was stopped after USM batted in the fifth inning, in adherence with the LEC's eight-run rule.

The win is the 14th in 16 games up north for Eastern (20-6, 7-1 little east), ranked second in the NCAA Division III New England region. The Warriors trail only defending conference champion Rhode Island College (7-0-1) in the LEC standings. The Anchorwomen, ranked fourth in New England, swept visiting Plymouth State University Saturday.

The Warriors have won at least 20 games for four straight seasons and in five of the last six years

Ranked among the national leaders in hits per game, ERA and strikeouts, Rathbun recorded 15 of 21 outs via the strikeout in the first game. She struck out the side in the first and second innings and retired two batters on strikes in each of the ensuing four innings. Only two Southern Maine (5-27, 3-7 little east) batters reached base, both on hits. The Huskies had a one-out single in the second and a leadoff double in the fourth. With the game scoreless in the fourth, Freshman Lauren DiCecco (South Berwick, ME) doubled to open the inning and move to third on a wild pitch. Rathbun subdued the threat with two swinging strikeouts and an infield ground ball.

Rathbun (14-2) outdueled USM freshman righty Alexandra Perdomo (Portland, ME) in the opener. Perdomo limited Eastern to just four hits and one earned run while fanning five and walking on. The Warriors broke through with a run in the fourth on Sullivan's sacrifice fly that plated senior pinch runner **Stephanie Buchanan (Moosup)**. Senior first baseman **Rachel Denny (East Haddam)** extended her program record for doubles to 38 with a leadoff double, and Buchanan moved to third on a fly ball to center by Rathbun. Eastern added an insurance run in the sixth when sophomore **Katie Dinihanian (Stratford)** drew a leadoff walk, stole second and moved to third on a throwing error. She scored on Sullivan's two-out single.

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In the nightcap, freshman **Priscilla Alicea (Stratford)** reached base three times with a triple, single and walk. She scored two runs and drove in two and also stole her 13th base in 14 tries this year. Sullivan was 3-for-3 with a double and triple, scored two runs and drove in two.

Senior righty **Katie Pensiero (Stamford)** benefited from Eastern's nine-hit attack. She recorded her first complete game and shutout in eight starts this year with a three-hitter. She fanned seven and walked two for her fifth win in six decisions.

Rathbun has gained consecutive shutout wins in her last three starts and has not allowed an earned run in the last 33 innings. She has 146 strikeouts and a 0.46 ERA in 107 innings this year and has given up an average of only 2.55 hits per seven innings.

Junior shortstop **Kim Church (Farmington)** registered her 100th career hit with an infield RBI single in the third inning of the nightcap. She added a two-run , two-out single in the fourth inning.

Eastern faces host Massachusetts Dartmouth Tuesday in a 3:30 p.m. conference doubleheader.

little east conference

Thursday, April 16, 2009

EASTERN SOFTBALL SWEEPS WESLEYAN, NOW 12-2 UP NORTH
Denny sets career doubles record, Rathbun pitches two-hitter in Game 2

MIDDLETOWN, Conn. – Senior **Rachel Denny (East Haddam)** set a program record for career doubles in the first game and freshman righty **Molly Rathbun (Hebron)** pitched a two-hit shutout in the nightcap to propel the Eastern Connecticut State University softball team to a 7-3, 3-0 sweep of Wesleyan University Thursday afternoon.

Ranked second in New England, Eastern (18-6) won for the 12th time in 14 outings since returning from Florida. Wesleyan (11-15) had beaten Eastern three of the previous four times the teams had met after the Warriors had won the first nine games in this series.

Denny, who drove in four runs with three hits in the doubleheader, broke the program's career record for doubles with the 36th and 37th of her four-year career in the first game, breaking Michelle Cunningham's ten-year-old record of 35. Denny already owns a number of program career records, including those for home runs, total bases and RBI.

Ranked third nationally in least hits allowed per game (2.82) and sixth in ERA, Rathbun (13-2, 0.49) lowered those marks in the nightcap when she faced only two batters over the minimum. Rathbun, who did not walk a batter and fanned five, retired 17 straight batters in between a two-out single in the first and a one-out single in the seventh. It was Rathbun's second shutout this year and the seventh time in 13 starts this year that she has given up two or less hits. She has allowed only one extra-base hit (a double) in her last eight outings.

Freshman righty **Rosie Manzo (Hudson, MA)** was credited with her first collegiate win in the first game in relief of senior righty **Katie Pensiero (Stamford)**. Manzo induced a come-backer for a double play to end the fifth inning with the score tied 3-3. She gave up only one hit with two strikeouts and a walk over the final 2 2/3 innings. The Warriors won the first game by scoring four times in the top of the seventh inning on three hits, a dropped fly ball in the outfield to snap a 3-3 tie. Junior **Katie O'Toole (Waterbury)** got the inning going with a pinch double. Rathbun drove in the go-ahead run with an infield ground ball, Denny doubled in two, and junior shortstop **Kim Church (Farmington)** made it 7-3 with a two-out RBI triple. Church also singled leading off the second game of the nightcap for her 99th career hit.

Freshman leadoff hitter **Priscilla Alicea (Stratford)** had three hits and reached twice by walk and stole two bases and scored three runs for Eastern in the doubleheader. Alicea was thrown out stealing for the first time this year and is now 12 for 13.

Ranked seventh nationally in field percentage, Eastern committed only one error on the day to improve its percentage to .975.

Eastern hosts the University of Southern Maine Saturday in a 1 p.m. Little East Conference doubleheader on Seniors' and Alumni Day at Spector Field.

Thursday, April 16, 2009

EASTERN SOFTBALL SWEEPS WESLEYAN, NOW 12-2 UP NORTH
Denny sets career doubles record, Rathbun pitches two-hitter in Game 2

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Freshman righty **Rosie Manzo (Hudson, MA)** was credited with her first collegiate win in the first game in relief of senior righty **Katie Pensiero (Stamford)**. Manzo induced a come-backer for a double play to end the fifth inning with the score tied 3-3. She gave up only one hit with two strikeouts and a walk over the final 2 2/3 innings. The Warriors won the first game by scoring four times in the top of the seventh inning on three hits, a dropped fly ball in the outfield to snap a 3-3 tie. Junior **Katie O'Toole (Waterbury)** got the inning going with a pinch double. Rathbun drove in the go-ahead run with an infield ground ball. Denny doubled in two, and junior shortstop **Kim Church (Farmington)** made it 7-3 with a two-out RBI triple. Church also singled leading off the second inning of the nightcap for her 99th career hit.

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Eastern hosts the University of Southern Maine Saturday in a 1 p.m. Little East Conference doubleheader on Seniors' and Alumni Day at Spector Field.

Sunday, April 12, 2009

PITCHING LEADS EASTERN SOFTBALL AGAINST TUFTS, WELLESLEY

Warriors don't give up an earned run in splitting pair against top New England teams

WELLESLEY, Mass. – Three Eastern Connecticut State University softball pitchers held two opponents without an earned run as the Warriors defeated Wellesley College, 3-0, after dropping a 2-0 decision to unbeaten Tufts University Sunday afternoon at Wellesley College.

The loss to No. 10 nationally-ranked Tufts (26-0) – the only undefeated team in Division III – was Eastern's (15-5) first after eight northern wins. The win over Wellesley (13-10) was the Warriors' second this season against the Blue.

The day featured three teams in their respective New England conferences. Eastern leads the Little East Conference at 4-0; Tufts shows an 8-0 record in the New England Small College Athletic Conference, and Wellesley is second in the New England Womens' and Men's Athletic Conference with a 7-2 record.

Tufts U. 2, Eastern Conn. 0

Eastern freshman righty **Molly Rathbun (Hebron)** and Tufts sophomore righty Izzie Santone (12-0) battled through six scoreless innings before the Jumbos scored two unearned runs after there were two out in the top of the seventh inning.

With two out and a runner on, an infield error prolonged Tufts' seventh inning, and senior second baseman Danielle Lopez drove in the only runs of the game with a two-run single to center. The error was only Eastern's third in its first nine northern games.

In the bottom of the seventh, Eastern's first two runners reached safely, but a double play on an outfield fly ball erased the lead run and a fly ball to center to end the game.

Rathbun lowered her ERA to 0.58 in the loss, which was her second in 13 decisions. In both losses, the opposing team has scored only unearned runs and they came in their final at-bat. Against Tufts, Rathbun gave up seven hits while fanning two and walking five. Eastern managed only four hits off Santone, who fanned three and walked four.

(more)

Rathbun entered the week ranked first nationally in least hits allowed per seven innings, fifth in earned run average, and seventh in strikeouts per game.

Eastern Conn. 3, at Wellesley College 0

Eastern scored two runs in the top of the first inning on three hits, two walks, an error and passed ball, with senior catcher **Rachel Denny (East Haddam)** driving in the first run with a sacrifice fly. Rathbun hit her third home run of the season with one out in the third.

Senior righty **Katie Pensiero (Stamford)** combined on the shutout with freshman righty **Rosie Manzo (Hudson, MA)**. Pensiero (4-0) gave up five hits with five strikeouts and two walks over the first six innings.

Rathbun was 3-for-3 and sophomore leftfielder **Katie Dinihanian (Stratford)** was 2-for-4 with a run scored for Eastern, which managed only six hits. Junior shortstop **Kim Church (Farmington)** reached twice on walks. She led off the game with a walk, went to third on an infield single by Dinihanian, and scored the first run on Denny's sacrifice fly to center.

The win was the second in as many games this year for Eastern against Wellesley (13-10). Rathbun pitched a complete-game four-hitter with 13 strikeouts in a 2-1 win over the Blue March 26 at Clermont, Fla.

Tuesday, April ⁷~~4~~, 2009

EASTERN SOFTBALL SWEEPS WHEATON FOR FIRST TIME, 6-4, 9-1
Now 8-0 since returning from Florida, Warriors off to best northern start since 1988

NORTON, Mass. – Freshman **Molly Rathbun (Hebron)** pitched a complete-game two-hitter and hit a two-run home run as the Eastern Connecticut State University softball team completed its first sweep of Wheaton College with 6-4, 9-1 victories Tuesday at Clark Field.

Last week's New England and Little East conference Pitcher-of-the-Week, Rathbun fanned six without a walk in winning her 11th game of the season against a loss in the second game, which was stopped after six innings due to the eight-run rule. She hit a two-run home run in the top of the sixth – her second of the season -- to round out the scoring. Rathbun faced only two batters over the minimum. With Eastern leading after a four-run second inning, Rathbun allowed a leadoff double in the third when the Lyons scored their only run. The only other hit was a two-out single up the middle in the fourth.

Rathbun has a 0.63 ERA with 110 strikeouts and 26 walks in 14 appearances this season.

Ranked second in New England, Eastern improves to 8-0 up north, its best northern start since the 1988 team won its first 20 northern games on the way to the regional championship and national third-place finish. In four previous doubleheaders with Wheaton (11-17), Eastern had been swept three times and had split once. The Warriors had been swept each of the last two years.

On the day, Eastern had 26 hits and committed only one error. Freshman **Priscilla Alicea (Stratford)**, senior **Courtney Caswell (South Kingstown, RI)** and junior **Kim Church (Farmington)** all had four hits, with Rathbun, senior **Rachel Denny (East Haddam)**, and junior **Ashley Sullivan (Trumbull)** each collecting three. Rathbun drove in six runs and Church and Sullivan five each.

Senior righty **Katie Pensiero (Stamford)** and freshman righty **Rosie Manzo (Hudson, MA)** combined on the win, the third without a loss this year for Pensiero.

Eastern hosts Keene State College Saturday in a Little East Conference doubleheader at 1 p.m. at Howard Spector Field. Keene eliminated Eastern from last year's LEC tournament at Spector Field.

little east conference

Sunday, April 5, 2009

EASTERN SOFTBALL SWEEPS PLYMOUTH STATE, 1-0, 6-5

In opener, Rathbun pitches one-hitter with 12 strikeouts; Church drives in run

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. -- Freshman righty **Molly Rathbun (Hebron)** pitched a one-hitter with 12 strikeouts for her tenth win of the year in the opener as the Eastern Connecticut State University softball team posted 1-0, 6-5 Little East Conference wins over Plymouth State University Sunday afternoon at Howard Spector Field.

In the first game, Rathbun (10-1) allowed only two baserunners and recorded her 100th strikeout of the season, and junior shortstop **Kim Church (Farmington)** drove in pinch runner **Rosie Manzo (Hudson, MA)** from second base with a double in the sixth inning for the only run of the game.

In the second game, Eastern (12-4, 4-0 little east) scored two runs in the bottom of the third inning to snap a 3-3 tie, and Rathbun struck out two in a 1-2-3 seventh inning to earn her second save and preserve the victory over Plymouth (11-6, 2-2 little east).

Plymouth tied the second game on sophomore cleanup hitter Andrea Pydynkowski's (Danvers, MA) third home run of the season -- a three-run blast on a 3-2 pitch over the 215 sign in left-center off Eastern senior righty and winner **Katie Pensiero (Stamford)**. The Warriors re-gained the lead with two runs in the bottom of the inning on RBI singles by No. 9 hitter **Priscilla Alicea (Stratford)** and sophomore pinch hitter **Rachel Soychak (Mahopac, NY)**. The hits plated senior third baseman **Courtney Caswell (Wakefield, RI)** and Alicia, respectively.

In the opener, Rathbun faced only two batters over the minimum. Junior shortstop Sammi Romano (Kingston, NH) walked with two out in the first and freshman leftfielder Allie Luisi (North Kingstown, RI) singled leading off the fourth. Romano advanced to second on a wild pitch before Rathbun fanned Pydynkowski to end the inning. Rathbun got a strikeout, ground ball and infield popup to leave a runner stranded at first in the fourth.

Rathbun, who has four complete-game one-hitters this year, struck out at least ten batters for the sixth time in nine starts this year. She has 104 strikeouts in 71 1/3 innings for an average of 10.2 this year. She lowered her season ERA to 0.59.

(more)

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Plymouth senior righty Courtney MacFarland (Hampstead, NH) was locked in a duel with Rathbun until the Warriors scraped up the only run of the first game. MacFarland allowed only three hits without walking a batter and fanning five in a complete-game effort.

Senior centerfielder **Ashley Sullivan (Trumbull)** had three of Eastern's 13 hits on the day, with Caswell and Church adding two each. Church has hit safely in six straight games. Church and Alicea each scored two runs on the day and Sullivan remained perfect this season on seven stolen base attempts, swiping three. Eastern is 27-for-28 this year in stolen bases. The Warriors did not commit an error in the doubleheader, improving their average to .974.

Pydynkowski doubled and homered in the second game and matched Luisi with two of Plymouth's seven hits on the day. Both also reached on walks.

Eastern visits Wheaton College (MA) Tuesday for a 3 p.m. doubleheader.

Wednesday, April 1, 2009

EASTERN SOFTBALL SWEEPS SPRINGFIELD COLLEGE

Denny breaks one career record, ties another in 7-2, 5-3 victories over Pride

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. – Senior first baseman **Rachel Denny (East Haddam)** broke the Eastern Connecticut State University career record for RBI and tied the career record for doubles in the first game and freshman right-handed pitcher **Molly Rathbun (Hebron)** won both games as the Warriors swept Springfield College, 7-2, 5-3 Wednesday at Howard Spector Field.

Ranked second in New England, Eastern (10-4) collected 19 hits in the doubleheader in sweeping its second doubleheader in five days since returning from its spring trip. Springfield (7-13) was coming off two losses against No. 8 nationally-ranked Tufts University and falls to 5-7 up north.

Denny, a 2009 pre-season All-America, now has 119 career RBI, one more than previous record-holder Carrie Loring '94. She now has 35 doubles, tying the record of Michelle Cunningham (35). Denny had two RBI doubles in the first game.

Denny, freshman leftfielder **Alicia Mangiafico (Manchester)**, junior shortstop **Kim Church (Farmington)**, freshman rightfielder **Priscilla Alicea (Stratford)** and sophomore outfielder **Katie Dinihanian (Stratford)** all had three hits in the doubleheader. Five of Eastern's hits in the doubleheader were doubles. Church moved to within ten of her 100th career hit.

Church drove in three runs, Denny, freshman Rathbun and junior **Michelle Lawlor (Brookline, MA)** two each. Church also reached twice by walk and Alicea stole two bases, her sixth and seventh steals of the year in as many attempts.

Rathbun (9-1) pitched a complete-game four-hitter in the opener and gained the second-game win with 2 ½ innings of scoreless relief. In the doubleheader, Rathbun allowed five hits and two (earned) runs in 9 1/3 innings, fanning eight and walking five.

(more)

Springfield struck first with runs in its first at-bats in both games. In the opener, the Warriors tied the game in the bottom of the first on Denny's RBI double, then scored two runs in the third, fourth and fifth innings. Denny and Alicea each had three of the team's 11 hits and drove in two runs. Denny drove in two runs with doubles and Alicia, batting ninth, singled and scored in the third and fourth innings and had an RBI single with the bases loaded in the fifth. Church drove in three runs in the first game with a two-run single in the fourth and a bases-loaded walk in the fifth.

After Springfield scored once in the first inning of the second game, the Warriors exploded for four runs in the bottom of the inning by collecting four of their game total of seven hits. Rathbun and Lawlor each had two-run doubles in the inning. Lawlor's hit came in her first at-bat of the season.

Trailing 5-3 in the second game, Springfield loaded the bases with two out in the seventh on two walks and a hit batsman, but Rathbun got a ground ball to Lawlor at third to end the game.

Senior first baseman Aimee Cassella (Southington) had two of Springfield's four hits in the first game and drove in both of their runs. Junior shortstop Jaime Moran (Manchester) and senior centerfielder Angela Atkins (East Haddam) each had two of Springfield's eight hits in the nightcap, with Moran scoring twice. Sophomore Amanda Novak (Cos Cob) came off the bench to reach three times in the nightcap. She had an RBI double in the third and walked twice.

The game featured teams which competed in last year's NCAA Division III New York Regional. Springfield dropped its first two games there while the Warriors reached the semifinals by winning twice before being eliminated.

Eastern hosts Plymouth State University Saturday in a Little East Conference doubleheader at 1 p.m.

little east conference

Saturday, March 28, 2009

EASTERN SOFTBALL BREEZES IN LITTLE EAST OPENERS

Warriors open home season with shutout sweep of Massachusetts Boston, 15-0, 4-0

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. – Junior centerfielder **Ashley Sullivan (Trumbull)** had four hits, scored four runs and drove in three as the Eastern Connecticut State University softball team opened its Little East Conference and home seasons with a 15-0, 4-0 doubleheader sweep of the University of Massachusetts Boston Saturday afternoon at Howard Spector Field.

Ranked in a tie for third in New England, Eastern (8-4, 2-0 little east) scored ten runs in the first inning of the opener on ten walks, seven wild pitches and three hit batsmen in a game stopped after the Beacons batted in the fifth inning due to the eight-run rule. Eastern is the pre-season favorite to win the conference while UMass (3-11, 0-2 little east) is picked to finish last.

Sullivan, a first-team all-region selection last year, had two hits in each game to raise her season average to .455. She also reached three times on walks. Junior shortstop **Kim Church (Farmington)** was 3-for-4 in the doubleheader with two RBI and two runs.

Freshman righty **Molly Rathbun (Hebron)** pitched a complete-game one-hitter to gain her seventh win in eight outings this season. She also closed out the second game with two hitless innings in relief of right-handed starter **Katie Pensiero (Stamford)** for her first save. Pensiero, making her first appearance of the season after missing the spring trip due to illness, allowed three hits over the first five innings while fanning three and walking two for her first win of the season.

Eastern hosts Springfield College Wednesday at 3:30 p.m.

(more)

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Game 1
Eastern Conn. 15, Massachusetts Boston 0 (5 inn.)

UMass Boston (3-10, 0-1 little east)	000	00	--	0	1	0
Eastern Conn. (7-4, 1-0 little east)	(10)41	0x	--	15	6	1

Courtney Haroules (0-3) and Elisa Laroche. Molly Rathbun (7-1) and Nikki Mustin.

Game 2
Eastern Conn. 4, Massachusetts Boston 0

UMass Boston (3-11, 0-2 little east)	000	000	0	--	0	3	1
Eastern Conn. (8-4, 2-0 little east)	001	102	x	--	4	9	1

Kara Willis (3-8) and Lisa Polsonetti. Katie Pensiero (1-0), Molly Rathbun (6) and Nikki Mustin. 2B-Rathbun, Kim Church (E).

Thursday, March 26, 2009

SOYCHAK'S SINGLE PACES EASTERN SOFTBALL PAST WELLESLEY
She drives in go-ahead run on two-strike single in fifth inning in 2-1 victory

CLERMONT, Fla. -- Freshman righty **Molly Rathbun (Hebron)** equaled her season high with 13 strikeouts in a complete-game four-hitter and sophomore **Rachel Soychak (Mahopac, NY)** broke a tie with a fifth-inning RBI single as the Eastern Connecticut State University softball team edged Wellesley College, 2-1, in a battle of 2008 NCAA tournament qualifiers.

Eastern scored the winning run in the fifth inning after there were two out and none on. Soychak's single on a 0-2 pitch brought home pinch runner **Stephanie Buchanan (Moosup)** from second. Buchanan was running for Rathbun, who had doubled to left.

Eastern took a 1-0 lead in the third on an RBI triple by No. 9 hitter **Priscilla Alicea (Stratford)** that sent home **Kelly Finlay (Thomaston)** from first. Wellesley tied the game in the fourth when Jessie Haladyna reached on an infield single with one out, stole second and scored on Alex Warren's single to center.

Eastern had six hits and received five walks but stranded nine runners. The Warriors left the bases loaded in the fourth and fifth innings against losing pitcher Beej Grundlock (4-3). Grundlock ended the fourth inning with a strikeout and escaped the fifth when pinch hitter **Rachel Denny (East Haddam)** flied out to the base of the center field fence.

Rathbun (6-1) walked four and hit a batter. She struck out the first six batters she faced and also retired the side on strikeouts to end the game in the seventh. In the seventh, Wellesley No. 9 hitter Megan Townsend singled to right. Rathbun fanned leadoff hitter Amanda Tai and No. 2 hitter Elora Daniels. After Townsend stole second, Rathbun struck out No.3 hitter Alison Davis on three pitches to end the game. Rathbun threw 126 pitches, 84 for strikes.

On the season, Rathbun has a 0.60 earned run average in 47 innings. She has appeared in seven games with six starts, six complete games and two shutouts. She has allowed 18 hits, 16 of them singles and given up six runs (four earned) with 67 strikeouts and 16 walks. Opponents are batting .118 against her.

Eastern is scheduled to play Columbia College (MO) Thursday at 1:30 p.m. in final game of the trip.

Eastern Conn. 2, Wellesley College 1

Wellesley College (5-6)	000	100	0	--	1	4	1
Eastern Conn. (6-3)	001	010	x	--	2	6	0

Beej Grundlock (4-3) and Megan Townsend. Molly Rathbun (6-1) and Nikki Mustin. 2B-Rathbun (E); 3B-Priscilla Alicea (E).

Thursday, March 26, 2009

Softball
At Clermont, FL

Columbia College (MO) 3, Eastern Conn. 0

Columbia (12-6)	012	000	0	--	3	7	0
Eastern Conn. (6-4)	000	000	0	--	0	1	2

Valerie Teter (9-2) and Ashley Farmer. Rosie Manzo (0-2) and Nikki Mustin. 2B-Teter ©.

NOTES: The game was the last for Eastern in Clermont.

Priscilla Alicea's (Stratford) bunt single in the bottom of the first inning was the only hit and one of only two baserunners for Eastern, which was struck out a program-record 18 times. Alicea stole second and was sacrificed to third but a strikeout ended the inning.

Teter struck out ten in a row and faced only two batters over the minimum. **Courtney Caswell (Wakefield, RI)** reached o a two-out walk in the fifth inning for Eastern's only other baserunner.

Columbia is ranked 23rd nationally in NAIA.

Eastern opens its home and Little East Conference seasons Saturday against the University of Massachusetts Boston in a 1 p.m. doubleheader.

Wednesday, March 25, 2009

EASTERN SOFTBALL DOWNS ELMHURST, LOSES TO UW-W
Rathbun pitches six-hitter for win, No. 8 Warhawks mercy Warriors

CLERMONT, Fla. – Eastern Connecticut State University freshman righty **Molly Rathbun (Hebron)** won her fifth game with a complete-game six-hitter in a 7-3 softball win over Elmhurst College Wednesday morning at Legends' Way Field at the National Training Center

In the second game, No. 8 ranked University of Wisconsin-Whitewater collected eight hits in 2+ inning off freshman righty **Rosie Manzo (Hudson, MA)** and went on to a 10-2 victory in a game stopped with Whitewater (8-1) batting in the bottom of the fifth due to the eight-run rule.

Eastern Conn. 7, Elmhurst College 3

Rathbun had shut out then No.-1 ranked Whitewater, 4-0, Sunday with a complete-game three-hitter. Battling the flu Wednesday, Rathbun (5-1) was staked to a 7-0 lead after four innings against Elmhurst (8-3) but tired in the sixth inning when the Blue Jays scored all of their runs on three hits. It was the second win in five days for Rathbun against Elmhurst. She had thrown 3 2/3 hitless innings in relief Saturday in Eastern's 6-4 win.

After scoring two unearned runs in the second inning, Eastern broke the game open with five runs in the fourth on three hits, two errors, a walk and hit batter. Freshman **Alicia Mangiafico (Manchester)** recorded her first collegiate hit, run and RBI in the inning, Rathbun singled in one run, and junior **Kim Church (Farmington)** drove in one with a double. Junior **Ashley Sullivan (Trumbull)** also drove in a run with an infield ground ball.

Rathbun had two of Eastern's six hits. On the mound, she fanned six and walked two. The earned runs were the first allowed by Rathbun in her career after 38 2/3 innings. In six games this year, she has a 0.52 ERA in 40 innings, with 54 strikeouts and 12 walks. She has given up 14 hits, 12 of them singles.

UW-Whitewater 10, Eastern Conn. 2 (5 inn., 8-run rule)

With Eastern senior ace **Katie Pensiero (Stamford)** unavailable to pitch on the trip due to illness, Manzo made her first collegiate start (second appearance) against a team which reached last year's national title game. Manzo was touched for four runs on five hits in the first inning was lifted with one out and one run in and the bases loaded in the third. Sophomore righty **Caitlin Cravens (Ellsworth, ME)** retired the side without further damage in the third and closed out the game.

(more)

Wednesday, March 25, 2009 - Softball

Sophomore lefty Jessica Stang (4-1), the losing pitcher in last year's national championship game and a 2009 pre-season All-America, pitched a complete-game two-hitter for her 20th win in 32 career appearances. Her only loss this year came Sunday against Eastern.

Whitewater No. 3 hitter Suzanne Gersich had three hits, drove in three with a fourth-inning home run, and scored two runs. Leadoff hitter Amy Gahl had a double and game-ending two-run triple among her three hits, scored two runs and drove in two.

Eastern scored a run in the fourth on senior **Rachel Denny's (East Haddam)** two-out single and another in the fifth on No. 9 hitter **Priscilla Alicea's (Stratford)** two-out double to shallow center.

Eastern closes out its trip Thursday against Wellesley College (9:30 a.m.) and Manchester College (11:30 a.m.).

Eastern Conn. 7, Elmhurst College 3

Eastern Conn. (5-2)	025	000	0	--	7	6	0
Elmhurst (8-3)	000	003	0	--	3	6	4

Molly Rathbun (5-1) and Nikki Mustin. Lindsay Nauman (4-1) and Liz McAllister, Kendra Ostrader (5). 2B-Church (Ea), Maureen Roderick (E).

UW-Whitewater 10, Eastern Conn. 2, 5 inn. (8-run rule)

Eastern Conn. (5-3)	000	11	--	2	2	1
UW-Whitewater (8-1)	401	32	--	10	13	2

One out when game ended

Rosie Manzo (0-1), Caitlin Cravens (3) and Nikki Mustin. Jessica Stang (4-1) and Liz Yucuis, Taylor Rothmund (5). 2B-Priscilla Alicea (E), Amy Gahl, Amanda LeBeau (W); 3B-Gahl (W); HR-Suzanne Gersich (1) (W).

Monday, March 23, 2009

RATHBUN PITCHES ONE-HITTER AND FANS 13 FOR EASTERN SOFTBALL

Only two batters reach base against freshman righty, who wins fourth game

CLERMONT, Fla. -- In her third career start, freshman **Molly Rathbun (Hebron)** pitched a complete-game one-hitter with a season-high 13 strikeouts as the Eastern Connecticut State University softball team disposed of Lawrence University, 5-0, Monday afternoon at Legends' Way Field at the National Training Center.

Against Lawrence (0-3), the 5-foot-9 inch Rathbun (4-0) allowed only two baserunners in tossing her second consecutive shutout. She allowed only one baserunner (a walk) through the first five innings before No. 8 hitter Lara Wasserman rapped a clean double down the left field line on a 2-1 pitch. Rathbun stranded Wasserman on third with the help of two strikeouts.

Rathbun threw 88 pitches—62 for strikes -- in the one hour and 37 minute game. The shutout was the second in the last two starts for Rathbun and the 13 strikeouts were just three shy of the program's game record. On Sunday, she surrendered only three singles and fanned 12 in a 4-0 win over No. 1 nationally-ranked University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.

Eastern managed seven hits off complete-game loser Emily Perish (0-2), scoring two runs in the fifth and two more in the sixth with the help of errors and passed balls to break open a tight game. Batting cleanup, Rathbun doubled twice and drove in the first run of the game with a sacrifice fly. She led off the sixth inning with her second double of the game to the base of the center field fence and pinch runner **Michelle Lawlor (Brookline, MA)** later scored on successive passed balls.

Eastern scored the only run it would need in the fourth inning when senior first baseman **Rachel Denny (East Haddam)** tripled to right field and came home on Rathbun's fly ball to center.

The Warriors made it 3-0 in the fifth on singles by senior third baseman **Courtney Caswell (Wakefield, RI)** and sophomore leftfielder **Katie Dinihanian (Stratford)**, junior shortstop **Kim Church's (Farmington)** suicide squeeze bunt and two throwing errors. Batting ninth, Dinihanian drove Caswell with the first run on a single to center. She then stole second and raced to third on a throwing error by the catcher, and scored on Church's sacrifice bunt.

Leading 3-0, the Warriors tacked on two more runs on Rathbun's leadoff double, a single by sophomore DP **Rachel Soyachak (Mahopac, NY)**, two passed balls and an outfield error on Caswell's routine fly ball which allowed her to circle the bases. Rathbun struck out four batters at least twice -- with No. 3 hitter Alex Goodson going down three times on strikes . She struck out five straight at one point early in the game. In four games this year, Rathbun has not allowed an earned run in 25 2/3 innings. She has given up one run and seven hits (six singles) while fanning 37 and walking ten. Opponents are batting .084 against her servings.

Chicago 1, Eastern Conn. 0 (8 inn./TB)

After tossing five no-hit innings and finishing with a one-hitter in Eastern's (4-2) 5-0 win over

(more)

Monday, March 23, 2009 - Softball

Lawrence University, Rathbun (4-2) came back two hours later to throw a perfect game for six innings but sustained a one-hit loss when the University of Chicago (3-1) scored the only run on a wild pitch with one out in the bottom of the eighth. A leadoff single in the top of the seventh was the only batter to reach base against Rathbun, who fanned 11.

Each team started the eighth inning by placing a runner on second base, in according to the international tie-breaker rule. In the top of the eighth, Eastern botched a suicide squeeze which resulted in the final out of the inning on a close play at home plate. With a runner on third in the bottom of the eighth and one out, Rathbun uncorked a wild pitch on her first delivery to Liz Payonk, allowing Kathleen Duffy to score the winning run. A leadoff single in the top of the seventh was the only batter to reach base against Rathbun, who fanned 11.

Winning pitcher Sarah Neuhaus, also a freshman righty, pitched a complete-game three-hitter and like Rathbun, did not walk a batter.

With the score tied, Eastern had runners on second and third and one out in the sixth, but Neuhaus got an infield pop and a called strikeout to end the threat. The Warriors also stranded a runner at second in the fourth.

With the Warriors playing their sixth game in three days, head coach Diana Pepin mixed her lineup against the Maroons. Senior second baseman **Kelly Finlay (Thomaston)** replaced junior **Kim Church (Farmington)** at shortstop, and senior **Stephanie Buchanan (Moosup)** and freshman **Christine Yeomans (Durham)** made their first career starts at right field and second base, respectively. Yeomans recorded her first collegiate hit with a single leading off the sixth inning and was sacrificed to second by No. 9 hitter Buchanan.

In two games on the day, Rathbun allowed two hits and no earned runs in 14 1/3 innings. She fanned 24 and walked one. After six games this year, Rathbun has not allowed an earned run in 33 innings. She has surrendered just eight hits (seven singles) and two runs while fanning 48 and walking ten. Opposing batters are hitting just .077.

Eastern Conn. 5, Lawrence U. 0

Eastern Conn. (4-1)	000	122	0	--	5	7	0
Lawrence (0-3)	000	000	0	--	0	1	3

Molly Rathbun (4-0) and Nikki Mustin. Emily Perish (0-2) and Hillary Cheever. 2B-Rathbun 2 (E); 3B-Rachel Denny (E).

U. of Chicago 1, Eastern Conn. 0, 8 inn. (tiebreaker)

Eastern Conn. (4-2)	000	000	00	--	0	3	0
Chicago (3-1)	000	000	01	--	1	1	1

One out when winning run scored

Molly Rathbun (4-1) and Nikki Mustin. Sarah Neuhaus (2-0) and Sara Whaley.

Sunday, March 22, 2009

EASTERN SOFTBALL SHUTS OUT NO. 1 UW-WHITewater, 4-0
Freshman Molly Rathburn fans 12 in a complete-game three-hit victory

CLERMONT, Fla. – A year ago, pitcher **Molly Rathburn (Hebron)** was striking out opposing high school hitters by the dozen. In her second collegiate start Sunday, the 5-foot-9 inch righty fanned 12 University of Wisconsin-Whitewater batters in a complete-game three-hit gem that led the Eastern Connecticut State University softball team to a 4-0 win over the No. 1 ranked team in Division III.

Eastern (3-1) settled for a split of two games at Legends' Way Field at the National Training Center Sunday when Buffalo State College scored six runs in the fourth inning in a 9-2 victory.

Eastern Conn. 4, UW-Whitewater 0

In one of the most overwhelming performances against a national-caliber team in many years, Rathburn limited Whitewater (4-1) to three singles as she handed the Warhawks their first shutout loss since 2007. Whitewater returned all but two starters from a team which reached last year's national championship game.

Rathburn had a no-hitter until No. 9 hitter Courtney Baldwin punched an opposite-field single to left with two out in the fifth. After the first inning, only one Whitewater got as far as second base. Rathburn did not walk a batter after walking two in the first inning, when she got a swinging strikeout of No. 5 hitter Amanda LeBeau to strand runners at second and third.

Rathburn (3-0), who struck out 12 batters in 11 2/3 innings of two season-opening wins Saturday, struck out four straight batters over the first two innings Sunday, and later fanned four of six hitters. She completed the shutout with two swinging strikeouts and an infield ground ball in the seventh.

Rathburn has not allowed an earned run in three games this year (giving up one total run) while striking out 24 in 18 2/3 innings and giving up only six hits (all singles). Rathburn outdueled Whitewater's 2008 freshman All-America lefty Jessica Stang, who gave up seven hits and was able to strike out only three Eastern batters.

Freshman rightfielder **Priscilla Alicea (Stratford)** had a sacrifice fly to give Eastern a 1-0 lead in the third, and senior catcher/first baseman **Rachel Denny (East Haddam)** made it 3-0 with a two-out, two-run opposite-field single to right. No. 9 hitter **Katie Dinihanian (Stratford)** scored the fourth run in the fifth, coming home on Denny's two-out RBI double down the left field line. Buffalo State 9, Eastern Conn. 2

Making her second start this year after coming out of the bullpen almost exclusively last year, sophomore righty **Caitlin Cravens (Ellsworth, ME)** was knocked out while the Bengals were scoring six runs in the fourth inning on four hits, two walks, and two infield errors. Freshman righty **Rosie Manzo (Hudson, MA)** made her collegiate debut in place of Cravens, working the

(more)

Sunday, March 22, 2009 -- Softball

final 3 2/3 innings. Manzo did not allow a hit and only one baserunner over the final two innings. Cravens has stepped in as the No. 2 starter due to the illness of senior co-captain **Katie Pensiero (Stamford)**, who is not expected to see action until the northern and home-opener Saturday against Massachusetts Boston.

Denny drove in both Eastern runs with doubles in the first and third innings. Denny has six RBI this year and needs three to break the career record of 118. She already holds the season record. Junior shortstop **Kim Church (Farmington)** and junior centerfielder **Ashley Sullivan (Trumbull)** matched Denny with two hits each.

Sullivan is 7-for-10 this season, Dinihanian 6-for-12, Denny 6-for-14 and Rathbun 5-for-13 with three runs and three RBI. The team is batting .316.

Monday, Eastern faces Lawrence University (9:30 a.m.) and the University of Chicago (1:30 p.m.)

Eastern Conn. 4, UW-Whitewater 0

UW-Whitewater (4-1)	000	000	0	--	0	3	1
Eastern Conn. (3-0)	003	010	x	--	4	7	1

Jessica Stang (2-1) and Liz Yucuis. Molly Rathbun (3-0) and Rachel Denny. 2B-Denny (E).

Buffalo State College 9, Eastern Conn. 2

Buffalo State (3-1)	200	610	0	--	9	10	2
Eastern Conn. (3-1)	101	000	0	--	2	8	2

Nicole Sabura (2-0) and Lindsay Goff. Caitlin Cravens (0-1), Rosie Manzo (4) and Nikki Mustin. 2B-Marissa Mariano (B), Rachel Denny 2 (E); 3B-Priscilla Alicea (E).

Saturday, March 21, 2009

BEHIND RATHBUN, EASTERN SOFTBALL WINS TWO

Freshman pitches and hits Warriors to two season-opening victories

CLERMONT, Fla. -- Freshman **Molly Rathbun (Hebron)** did not allow an earned run in 11 2/3 innings and drove in the go-ahead runs in both games as the Eastern Connecticut State University softball team opened its 2009 season with wins over Babson College and Elmhurst College Saturday at Legends' Way Field at the National Training Center.

Eastern defeated Babson (8-6), 2-1 in eight innings when Rathbun's routine fly ball to right with two outs was dropped, allowing sophomore outfielder **Katie Dinihanian (Stratford)** to score the game-ending run from second base. Rathbun pitched a complete-game three-hitter with nine strikeouts in that game and didn't allow an earned run.

In a 6-4 win over Elmhurst (2-1), Rathbun tripled in the first two runs of the game in the first inning and added a solo home run leading off the third. Rathbun was credited with her second win of the day by pitching the final 3 2/3 innings in place of sophomore starter **Caitlin Cravens (Ellsworth, ME)**.

In accordance with the international tie-breaker rule, each team began the eighth inning of the first game with a runner on second. Rathbun got two strikeouts to leave the Babson runner stranded in the top of the eighth. With No. 9 hitter Dinihanian on second base to begin the bottom of the eighth, Babson sophomore pitcher Caroline Barr got two strikeouts before intentionally walking Eastern No. 3 hitter **Rachel Denny (East Haddam)**. On a 3-1 pitch, Rathbun then lofted a high, yet easy, medium-deep fly ball to right. The ball was dropped, allowing Dinihanian to ease home with the game-ending run.

The Warriors collected 15 hits off two Elmhurst pitchers in the second game and led 5-0 before the Blue Jays battled back. Trailing 5-1, Elmhurst knocked out Cravens in a three-run fourth inning to cut the gap to 5-4. Rathbun got two fly balls to leave two runners aboard in place of Cravens, then faced only one batter over the minimum over the final two innings.

Against Babson, Rathbun stranded 11 baserunners, getting strikeouts to end four different innings. In two of those innings, she left the bases loaded. Against Elmhurst, the right-hander fanned three and walked one and did not allow a hit.

Senior all-region centerfielder **Ashley Sullivan (Trumbull)**, sidelined throughout most of the pre-season with a broken hand, had four hits in the second game after entering as a late-inning replacement against Babson. Rathbun and Dinihanian both had three hits against Elmhurst, with Rathbun scoring three to go along with her three RBI.

Eastern senior pitching ace **Katie Pensiero (Stamford)** did not make the ten-game trip after becoming sick this past week.

Sunday, Eastern faces UW-Whitewater at 9:30 a.m. and Buffalo State College at 1:30 p.m.

(more)

Saturday, March 21, 2009 - Softball

Eastern Conn. 2, Babson College 1 (8inn./tie-breaker)

Babson College (8-6)	001	000	00	--	1	3	2
Eastern Conn. (1-0)	100	000	01	--	2	6	1

Two out when winning run scored.

Caroline Barr (1-3) and Nicole Latini. Molly Rathbun (1-0) and Katie O'Toole. 2B-Katie Dinihanian (E).

Eastern Conn. 6, Elmhurst College 4

Eastern Conn. (2-0)	302	001	0	--	6	15	4
Elmhurst (2-1)	001	300	0	--	4	9	2

Caitlin Cravens, Molly Rathbun (4) and Rachel Denny. Vanessa Kalal, Amber Schwarzinger (3) and Jill Karsa, Liz McAllister (3). WP-Rathbun. 2B-Ashley Grice (E1); 3B-Rathbun (EC), Becca Zumpf (E1); HR-Rathbun (1) (EC).