

Sunday, May 13, 2012

EASTERN ELIMINATED IN REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND

Following extra-inning victory over Coast Guard, Warriors are shut out by Tufts, 5-0

MANSFIELD, Conn. -- The Eastern Connecticut State University softball team emerged with a thrilling 5-4 eight-inning victory over the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in an NCAA tournament game Sunday afternoon at the Eastern Softball Field.

Unfortunately for top-seeded Eastern (44-3), it only prolonged its season for a few more hours, when it was eliminated in the first game of the championship round by No. 2 seed Tufts University (36-9), 5-0, which unseated the two-time regional champions with a perfect 4-0 tournament record and will represent New England in the NCAA Division III national tournament which gets underway Friday at Salem, VA.

Eastern would have needed two wins over Tufts -- the winner-take-all tilt scheduled for Monday afternoon -- to advance to the national tournament for a third straight time for the first time in 20 years.

After being shut out by Coast Guard, 5-0, in a second-round game Friday, the Warriors won three elimination games in two days before losing to Tufts for the second time in three games this year.

Freshman pitcher Allyson Fournier of Tufts, the tournament's Most Outstanding Player, spun a two-hit shutout Sunday for the Jumbos, fanning eight and walking only one in her first appearance this season against Eastern.

Tufts scored twice against Eastern All-America **Molly Rathbun (Hebron)** in the third and added single runs in the fourth, fifth and sixth against Rathbun and junior relievers **Christine Akcer (Milford)** and **Kassondra Silva (Hamden)**.

With Fournier cruising to her 22nd win against a single loss and Tufts comfortably ahead by the middle innings, there was little drama as Tufts won its eighth straight game, fourth without a loss in the double elimination tournament.

The suspense was reserved for the first game of the day, when the Warriors and Coast Guard exchanged home runs that sent the game into extra innings. In the top of the eighth, the Warriors pushed across what proved to be the winning run on infield singles by juniors **Arielle Cooper (Mystic)** and **Stephanie Johnson (Plainsville)** and an infield error. Cooper led off the inning and was sacrificed to second sophomore cleanup hitter **Megan Godwin (Manchester)**. With two out, Johnson outran a ground ball to second base, and when the throw was misplayed, Cooper came all the way around to score.

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Rathbun's monstrous grand slam home run into the trees beyond the left field fence – the 28th of her career -- on the first pitch that she saw in the fifth had vaulted the Warriors into a 4-1 lead, but Coast Guard (28-19) came right back in the sixth to tie the game on No. 5 hitter Kaitlin Ward's three-run blast off Rathbun.

If not for a remarkable season-saving catch in the bottom of the seventh by sophomore centerfielder **Mattie Brett (Waterford)**, Eastern's run through the losers' bracket would have ended in the semifinals. With two out and a runner on first and the game tied at 4-4, Coast Guard cleanup hitter Holli Bastineck launched a high fly ball in the gap between Brett and rightfielder **Priscilla Alicea (Stratford)**. With the runner off at the crack of the bat, Brett made a long run to her left and hauled in the drive at the base of the fence, avoiding a collision with Alicea in the process.

Eastern could not capitalize on a scoring opportunity in the top of the seventh against All-America pitcher Hayley Feindel (21-10) after No. 9 hitter **Kelly Paterson (Southington)** had reached on a one-out double. Feindel, who had tamed Eastern with a ten-strikeout, two-hit gem Friday, got a pair of outfield fly outs to end the threat.

Cooper had one of the two hits against Fournier – a leadoff single in the seventh – and tied the 26-year-old Eastern season record for hits (69), first established by first-team All-America Trish Wodatch in the 1986 national championship season. She finished the season with a program-record 122 total bases and program-tying 11 home runs and her .782 slugging percentage was .001 shy of the season mark.

Rathbun, Brett, Johnson and Paterson represented Eastern on the all-tournament team. Rathbun pitched all but 3 2/3 innings in six games, winning four and losing two and striking out 53 with a 2.31 ERA in 36 1/3 innings and hitting .333 (7-for-21) with 11 total bases and six RBI. She won a program record 33 games this year and concludes her four-year career with 103 wins and 1, 135 strikeouts, both program records.

Paterson led Eastern in the tournament with a .467 average (7-for-15) and handled 21 chances at first base without an error. Johnson batted .375 (6-for-16). Brett batted only .167 but, in addition to her game-saving catch, had a two-run double in the first inning of Saturday's 6-0 win over Ithaca College.

Fournier pitched all 28 innings for Tufts without allowing an earned run. She gave up ten hits while striking out 43 and walking only.

ALL-TOURNAMENT TEAM

Mattie Brett, OF, Eastern Connecticut
Francesca Busa, SS, Ithaca
Lena Cantone, 1B, Tufts
Jo Clair, C, Tufts
Hayley Feindel, P, Coast Guard
Sydney Folk, 1B, Ithaca
Allyson Fournier, P, Tufts*
Sara Hedtler, OF, Tufts
Stephanie Johnson, OF, Eastern Connecticut
Nina Korn, 1B, Rochester
Kelly Paterson, 1B, Eastern Connecticut
Molly Rathbun, P/DP, Eastern Connecticut
Jessica Richardson, C, Coast Guard

**Most Outstanding Player*

Friday, May 11, 2012

IN NCAA, COAST GUARD ENDS EASTERN SOFTBALL'S WIN STREAK

Warriors will need to win five games in three days to capture third straight regional title

MANSFIELD, Conn. – The Eastern Connecticut State University softball team has not had to play catch-up very often this year. If the Warriors hope to capture a third straight regional championship, that's exactly what they'll have to do.

In a second-round game at the NCAA Division III Mansfield Regional Tournament, top-seeded Eastern (41-2) had a 40-game win streak ended and was knocked into the losers' bracket in a 5-0 winners' bracket loss to fifth-seeded U.S. Coast Guard Academy Friday afternoon at the Eastern Softball Field.

Eastern, which survived a loss in the first game of the championship round in last year's regional, will need to win five games in the next three days to advance to its third straight NCAA Division III national tournament. The Warriors face third-seeded University of Rochester Saturday at 11 a.m. and would need to eliminate either fourth-seeded Ithaca College or sixth-seeded St. John Fisher College at 6:30 in order to extend their season until Sunday. Eastern would need two victories Sunday and another Monday to advance.

Coast Guard (28-17) faces second-seeded Tufts University in a meeting of the two remaining undefeated teams Saturday at 4 p.m.. That winner needs one victory either Sunday or Monday to claim the crown in the double-elimination tournament.

In a battle of senior All-America pitchers in Eastern's **Molly Rathbun (Hebron, Conn.)** and Coast Guard's **Hayley Feindel (River Edge, La.)**, the Bears broke a scoreless tie by scoring all five of their runs in the bottom of the fourth inning on four hits – three coming home on sophomore leadoff hitter **Devin Fellman's (New Port Richey, Fla.)** home run – to defeat Eastern (41-2) for the first time in three games this year.

The all-time NCAA leader in strikeouts (1,449) and wins (124), Feindel (21-8) was nursing a broken right finger and did not pitch against Eastern in the regular season. Friday, she gained revenge for a 1-0, nine-inning loss to the Warriors in the 2010 regional championship game by tossing a complete-game two-hitter with ten strikeouts and only one walk. She became the first pitcher to shut out Eastern in more than four years.

With two outs in the fourth, , Coast Guard senior **Jamie Kim (Irvine, Calif.)** and freshman **Erin Lisko (Waynesboro, Pa.)** each drove in a run on back-to-back singles. They were followed by Fellman's three-run homer to dead center field – her seventh roundtripper of the season.

Needing a victory to break her own program season record, Rathbun (30-2) shouldered her first defeat since dropping a 4-2 decision to Tufts University on the opening day of the season in Clermont, Fla. Rathbun allowed eight hits and two walks while fanning six through the first four innings.

Rathbun singled with one out and one on in the first, but Feindel stranded two runners in the with a pair of inning-ending strikeouts. She retired 12 in a row before junior **Kassondra Silva (Hamden, Conn.)** singled with one out in the fifth and the Warriors down by five. The Bears had three baserunners through the first three innings on two singles and a walk before breaking through in the fourth by scoring all of its runs with two out. Three consecutive batters reached safely before Fellman launched her three-run home run on a 1-2 pitch.

Eastern junior **Arielle Cooper (Mystic, Conn.)** opened the game by reaching on an infield error but was hitless in three at-bats as her program-record 33-game hitting streak came to an end. She also ground to third in the third and flew out to left to open the sixth.

Saturday, May 5, 2012

EASTERN SOFTBALL CHALKS UP THIRD STRAIGHT LEC TITLE

Cooper gains MVP laurels as Warriors down Western Connecticut in title game, 6-2

MANSFIELD, Conn. -- Junior third baseman **Arielle Cooper (Mystic)** had three hits -- including her tenth home run of the season that highlighted a three-run third inning -- as the Eastern Connecticut State University softball team claimed its third straight Little East Conference Tournament championship Saturday by defeating Western Connecticut State University, 6-2, in the first game of the championship round at the Eastern Softball Field.

Ranked No. 2 nationally, top-seeded Eastern (40-1) set a program season record for victories with its 39th straight triumph -- 12th straight in the LEC tournament play the last three years. Eastern qualifies automatically for the NCAA tournament and will host a regional tournament beginning Thursday.

Cooper's two-run home run in the third helped give senior All-America **Molly Rathbun (Hebron)** her 29th victory of the season (28 straight) against a loss. Rathbun has been the winning pitcher in the team's last 11 games. Rathbun pitched a six-hitter with seven strikeouts and the Warriors responded with ten hits off senior Magen Dargon (Trumbull) of fifth-seeded Western, which won three games in the tournament after a 3-1 loss to No. 2 seed Keene State College.

Western (30-15), which needed to beat Eastern twice in order to capture its fourth tournament title, had advanced to the championship round by eliminating Keene State in six innings, 8-0, in the first game of the day. Senior shortstop Danielle Basciano (Holmes, NY), the two-time LEC Player-of-the-Year, drove in six runs in that game with two doubles and a triple and Dargon shut down Keene (25-10-1) on four hits with eight strikeouts.

Named the tournament's Most Outstanding Player, Cooper slammed her tenth home run of the season and 23rd of her career (second all-time to Rathbun for the career record and one shy of the season mark) in the three-run third, junior first baseman **Kelly Paterson (Southington)** blasted a two-run home run in the fourth out of the No. 9 slot in the lineup -- her second of the season.

Western managed only one hit through the first five innings against Rathbun (a leadoff single by Basciano in the fourth), but broke through against Rathbun by collecting three of its hits. With two out, No. 3 hitter Jackie Zilnicki (Riverhead, NY) tripled in the first run and cleanup hitter Kylee Ruther (Stamford) plated Zilnicki with a double. Rathbun forced a comebacker to end the threat. Rathbun got two quick outs in the seventh and later stranded two runners with a tournament-ending popup to Paterson at first.

Cooper extended her program record hitting streak to 32 with three hits, with senior rightfielder **Priscilla Alicea (Trumbull)** -- her collected her 200th career hit Friday -- and Paterson adding two hits each. Basciano (two hits) was the only Western batter with more than one hit.

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Led by Cooper (.643), sophomore shortstop **Megan Godwin (Manchester)** (.500), Alicea (.462) and Paterson (.444), Eastern batted .423 in four tournament games and committed only two errors. Cooper drove in seven runs and scored six in the tournament and also handled ten chances at third base without an error. Sophomore centerfielder **Mattie Brett (Waterford)** hit two tournament home runs and led the Warriors with eight RBI, Rathbun driving in seven and scoring five runs.

Rathbun pitched all but two innings, throwing three complete games and two shutouts and giving up only 17 hits in 23 innings with 39 strikeouts and five walks. She was named tournament MVP as both a sophomore and junior.

Western's Zilnicki batted .467 in the tournament, with senior Kristin Ferrante (New Paltz, NY) at .417 and Basciano .412. Basciano drove in seven runs (six against Keene Saturday) and Zilnicki four. Dargon was credited with all five decisions for the Colonials, compiling a 2.15 ERA in 29 1/3 innings with 33 strikeouts and nine walks.

May 4, 2012
~~Friday, March 4, 2012~~

EASTERN SOFTBALL A WIN FROM THIRD STRAIGHT LEC TITLE
Warriors pound Rhode Island College and Keene State to remain unbeaten

MANSFIELD, Conn. - Two-time Little East conference Softball Tournament MVP **Molly Rathbun (Hebron)** of Eastern Connecticut State University struck out 15 for her 27th consecutive victory as the Warriors moved into the championship round of the 2012 LEC Tournament with a 10-0 victory over Keene State College Friday afternoon at the Eastern Softball Field.

Top-seeded Eastern (39-1) which tied the program record for season wins with its 38th straight victory, is the only remaining undefeated team and needs one win (in two tries) to claim its third straight title. Second-seeded Keene (25-9-1) faces fifth-seeded Western Connecticut State University (29-14) in an elimination game Saturday at noon. The winner must defeat Eastern twice later in the day to unseat the two-time defending champions.

Rathbun (28-1) won her third straight tournament game and has now been the pitcher of record in the team's last ten wins. She allowed only four hits in a game which featured 18 hits but no extra base hits.

Eastern, ranked No. 2 nationally, broke open a tight game with six runs on six hits in chasing senior pitcher Emily Albin. Trailing 1-0, Keene threatened against Rathbun in the bottom of the third but Rathbun left runners on the corners with a swinging strikeout to end the threat. The first six batters reached safely for Eastern two innings later. Sophomore, **Mattie Brett (Waterford)** drove in two runs in the inning with a single, with junior **Arielle Cooper (Mystic)**, junior **Kassondra Silva (Hamden)**, senior **Priscilla Alicea (Stratford)** and Rathbun all plating one.

Alicea, Rathbun and Brett all drove in two runs in the game. Alicea had three hits and scored two runs and Rathbun, Cooper and sophomore **Megan Godwin (Manchester)** all had two hits. Alicea collected her 200th career hit in the game and Cooper extended her program record hitting streak to 31. Rathbun became the first pitcher to shut out Keene this year since the Owls' season-opener.

Eastern 13, Rhode Island 2 (6)

In a battle of teams which had won their Thursday openers, the Warriors opened play Friday with a 13-2 win over third-seeded Rhode Island College.

The Warriors threatened right off the bat in the top of the first. RIC junior pitcher Emily Johnson got two quick outs, but Cooper singled through the left side and Godwin singled up the middle. Brett was hit by a pitch to load the bases, but Emily Johnson induced a ground out to get out of the jam.

The Anchorwomen used the momentum to take a 1-0 lead in the bottom of the frame, courtesy of Stacy Pokora's eighth home run of the year. It was Pokora's second homer in as many games at the tourney.

Eastern tied the game up and then took the lead in the fourth as freshman left fielder **Shannon Martin (Wethersfield)** led off with a single through the left side and was lifted for junior pinch runner **Courtney Weber (Groton)**. Weber promptly moved up to second on a wild pitch and Silva delivered a game-tying single up the middle.

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With two out and the bases full, Cooper singled to second base, bringing in junior first baseman **Kelly Paterson (Southington)** and senior pinch runner **Christine Yeomans (Durham)**. Godwin then singled in Rathbun and Brett delivered a lethal blow with a three-run homer (2) to left field, making it a 7-1 advantage for the top seed.

RIC loaded the bases in the bottom of the inning as Johnson doubled, junior right fielder Kristina Gingell singled and freshman first baseman Justin Thoma picked up a base knock. Freshman third baseman Monica Koehler plated Gingell with a one-out walk, but Rathbun recovered to strike out the next two hitters she faced to end the comeback bid.

Rathbun drew a one-out walk in the fifth and Cooper smacked a two-run homer (9) to center field to increase the visitor's lead to seven runs, 9-2.

In the sixth, junior relief pitcher **Christine Acker (Milford)** and sophomore pinch hitter **Stephanie Johnson (Plantsville)** each singled, with Acker moving up to third on an Anchorwoman error. With one down, Alicea walked to load the bases. Rathbun helped her own cause with grand slam (4) to center field to make it a 13-2 ballgame.

Rathbun pitched another strong game to get the win, allowing just two runs on five hits to go along with six strikeouts in four innings of work. Acker allowed just one hit in two innings of relief.

Johnson (8-10) took the loss, allowing eight runs on nine hits, to go along with seven walks and two strikeouts.

Cooper went 3-for-4 with a walk, two runs scored, four RBI and a home run. Rathbun went 2-for-4 with a walk, two runs scored, four RBI and a homer. Godwin was the only other Warrior with multiple hits, posting a 2-for-3 effort to go along with a run scored, two RBI and two walks.

Gingell went 2-for-2 with a walk and run scored. Pokora was 1-for-3 with a run scored, an RBI and a home run.

In three tournament games, Eastern has outscored the opposition 32-2 and outhit them 34-12. In 16 tournament innings, Rathbun has struck out 32 and walked four and allowed 11 hits and one earned run (two total). Led by Godwin (.545), Cooper (.545), Rathbun (.500), Silva (.500), Brett (.444) and Alicea (.444), the Warriors are batting .430 as a team in the tournament and have committed only two errors.

Eastern has now won 11 straight LEC tournament games over three seasons.

Keene, ranked fourth in the NCAA New England region, has won four LEC tournament titles but has finished second in each of its last three championship game appearances between 2008 and 2010. Western won the last of its three titles in 2004 and last reached the championship round in 2007.

Saturday, April 28, 2012

IN LEC SOFTBALL SWEEP, EASTERN'S ALICEA BREAKS HIT MARK
Warriors become first team in Little East softball history to win all of their regular-season games

GORHAM, Maine – On the final day of the regular season, Eastern Connecticut State University senior All-America pitcher **Molly Rathbun (Hebron)** won her 23rd and 24th straight games, senior rightfielder **Priscilla Alicea (Stratford)** broke the 20-year-old program career hit record and junior third baseman **Arielle Cooper (Mystic)** extended her program record for hits in consecutive games to 28 as the Warriors closed out the regular season on a 35-game winning streak and wrapped up the first undefeated Little East Conference regular season in conference history with 9-0, 9-0 wins over the University of Southern Maine Saturday afternoon at Towers Field on the USM campus.

The first game was stopped after five innings, senior second baseman **Christine Yeoman's (Durham)** RBI single making it a nine-run margin in the top of the fifth. In the second game, Southern Maine (4-34, 2-10 Little East) junior righty Stefanie Stockwell limited the Warriors to just two hits through five innings of a scoreless game before Eastern broke it open with nine runs on nine hits in its final two at-bats.

Already assured the No. 1 seed in the LEC tournament which it will host this Thursday through Saturday, No. 2 nationally-ranked Eastern (36-1, 14-0 Little East) becomes the first team in the 17-year history of LEC softball competition to win all of its regular-season games. The Warriors have won 40 and lost two over the last three seasons in LEC regular-season play. It was the third straight LEC regular season title for the two-time defending LEC tournament champions.

A 5-foot-2 inch, left-handed hitting No. 2 hitter, Alicea broke the record of 192 career hits formerly held by E-Club Hall of Famer Leanne Shoop (1989-1992) by collecting a double to center in her first at-bat of the twin bill with one out in the top of the first inning as part of a 3-for-3 effort at the plate in the opener with two RBI and a run scored. Alicea finished the doubleheader 4-for-7 with two RBI and three runs scored to improve her program record for career batting average to .398 (Rathbun is second at .394). She finished the afternoon with 196 career hits. Alicea, a three-time all-region outfielder, had 43 hits as a freshman, 59 as a sophomore, 50 as a junior and has 44 thus far in 2012.

Rathbun totalled 19 strikeouts in 7 2/3 innings of work over two games, Rathbun fired a three-hit gem with 13 strikeouts in the first game, then came on in relief of junior starter **Christine Akcer (Milford)** in the in the fourth inning of the second game for her 95th career win in 107 decisions. She has 1,038 strikeouts in 711 1/3 career innings.

Cooper had two hits and two runs scored in each game and also drove in two as the leadoff hitter in the opener. Cooper had a double and solo home run in the first game and singled in the sixth and seventh innings of the nightcap. The homer was her eighth of 2012 and 21st of her career.

Since going 0-for-10 in a three-game stretch in Florida, Cooper has hit safely in 28 in a row. Sixteen times she has prolonged the streak with one hit. Her 18th straight game with a hit 11 days ago had broken the previous record.

Behind Cooper and Alicea (two doubles)– who had four hits each on the day – Rathbun and sophomore centerfielder Mattie Brett (Waterford) had three each, with Brett doubling twice and Rathbun once for Eastern, a winner of ten straight over Southern Maine. -30-

Thursday, April 26, 2012

RATHBUN OF EASTERN NO-HITS WESLEYAN FOR SECOND TIME

In softball, Cooper extends hitting streak to 26 with decisive two-run home run in team's 33rd straight win

MANSFIELD, Conn. -- Senior All-America **Molly Rathbun (Hebron)** tied the Eastern Connecticut State University softball record with her eighth career no-hitter and junior third baseman **Arielle Cooper (Mystic)** extended her program-record hitting streak to 26 by driving in the only runs of the game with a two-run home run in the third in the Warriors' 2-0 victory over Wesleyan University Thursday night at the Eastern Softball Field.

Ranked No. 2 nationally, Eastern (34-1) won its 33rd straight game as Rathbun tossed her second no-hitter in as many years against Wesleyan (8-24). The no-hitter was the third this year and eighth of the career of Rathbun, who tied former All-America Christia Mohan's program record.

A winner of 22 straight, Rathbun (23-1) fanned 11 and walked only one in lowering her nation-leading ERA to 0.34. She allowed two baserunners and faced only two batters over the limit. Rathbun committed a fielding error on a leadoff ground ball by junior centerfielder Allee Beatty (Redding) and walked senior cleanup hitter Sam Epstein (Hewlett, NY) on a 3-2 pitch with two out in the seventh.

Cooper slammed her team-leading seventh home run of the season – the 20th of her career – with one out in the third for the only runs of the game. Sophomore No. 9 hitter **Mattie Brett (Waterford)** doubled to center with one out before Cooper homered off losing sophomore pitcher Laura Getchell (Raymond, ME). With the exception of the third inning, Getchell (3-9) gave up only one other hit – a one-out single to center by sophomore second baseman **Jen Tamindzija (Malden, MA)** in the fourth. Getchell fanned eight and walked three.

Rathbun had a 20-game hitting streak snapped, fanning twice and grounding to third in three plate appearances.

Eastern closes out the regular season Saturday with a doubleheader at the University of Southern Maine at 1 p.m. The Warriors look to close out the regular season with a perfect 14-0 Little East Conference mark.

Tuesday, April 24, 2012

EASTERN SOFTBALL CLINCHES TOP SEED IN LEC TOURNEY

Warriors sweep Western Connecticut, 4-1, 4-3 to extend winning streak to 32

MANSFIELD, Conn. -- Senior All-America **Molly Rathbun (Hebron)** won both games on the mound, recorded her 1,000th career strikeout, and rapped a three-run home run in the nightcap as the Eastern Connecticut State University softball team clinched the No. 1 seed in the Little East Conference tournament for the third straight season with a pair of come-from-behind wins, 4-1 and 4-3 in eight innings over Western Connecticut State University Tuesday night at the Eastern Softball Field.

Ranked No. 3 nationally and first in New England, Eastern (33-1, 12-0 Little East) has won 32 straight games and improved its three-year record in regular-season conference play to 38-2. As the No. 1 seed, Eastern will host the six-team, three-day double-elimination tournament beginning Thursday, May 3.

A winner of 21 straight pitching decisions this year, Rathbun (22-1) pitched a complete-game three-hitter without allowing an earned run in the first game, and pitched the final 3 2/3 innings of relief in the second game. In the second game, Rathbun blasted a three-run home run in the bottom of the first after Western (21-13, 3-7 Little East) had taken a 2-0 lead in the top of the first inning.

In the first game, Western scored an unearned run in the first inning and that lead held up until the Warriors scored twice in the fifth on RBI singles by freshman DP **Sam Rossetti (Shelton)** and sophomore centerfielder **Mattie Brett (Waterford)**. Eastern tacked on two insurance runs in the sixth on Cooper's RBI double and an RBI single by Rathbun.

Rathbun gained the second-game win after allowing the Colonials to tie the game in the sixth on a two-out single. Eastern won the game in the eighth when junior third baseman **Arielle Cooper (Mystic)** beat the throw home from third on sophomore leftfielder **Stephanie Johnson's (Southington)** bases-loaded ground ball to short. Cooper extended her program record hitting streak to 25 by singling to open the eighth. Rathbun, who has hit safely in 20 in a row, followed with a single and an infield ground out and intentional walk loaded the bases for Johnson with one out.

Junior **Christine Akcer (Milford)** pitched into the fifth inning of the second game, but gave way to Rathbun with one out and two aboard and the Warriors leading, 3-2. Junior first baseman **Kelly Paterson (Southington)** fielded a tough chance and threw out the runner for the second out and Rathbun got the final out on a swinging strikeout. Akcer allowed two runs on four hits with five strikeouts and two walk but did not figure in the decision after the Colonials reached Rathbun for the tying run in the sixth.

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Rathbun finished the doubleheader with four hits and four RBI, reaching base safely seven times. Cooper had three hits and scored three runs and sophomore shortstop **Megan Godwin (Manchester)**, Rossetti and senior rightfielder **Priscilla Alicea (Stratford)** all had two hits. Godwin also walked twice.

Jackie Zilnicki had four of Western's nine hits on the day.

With her fourth of six strikeouts in the opener - coming to the leadoff batter in the fourth -- Rathbun became the 13th pitcher in Division III history to strike out as many as 1,000 batters. By allowing Western's sixth-inning run in the second game, Rathbun fell one inning shy of tying her program record of 52 consecutive innings without allowing an earned run. Rathbun entered the game leading Division III in earned run average and shutouts and was second in least hits allowed per game, third in strikeouts per game, fourth in total strikeouts, and fifth in wins.

Alicea had one hit in each game to tie the program career record of 192 hits, set 20 years ago by E-Club Hall of Famer Leanne Shoop.

Eastern hosts Wesleyan Thursday at 7 p.m. in a single game.

Saturday, April 21, 2012

EASTERN SOFTBALL EXTENDS STREAKS IN 8-0, 7-2 LEC SWEEP
Against RIC, No. 3 Warriors move to 10-0 in Little East; winning streak reaches 30

MANSFIELD, Conn. – Senior **Molly Rathbun (Hebron)** won her 19th straight pitching decision and extended her hitting streak to 18 and junior third baseman **Arielle Cooper (Mystic)** extended her program-record hitting streak to 23 as the Eastern Connecticut State University softball team remained undefeated in the Little East Conference with its 29th and 30th straight overall wins, 8-0 in six innings and 7-2 against Rhode Island College Saturday afternoon at the Eastern Softball Field.

Ranked No. 3 nationally and No. 1 in New England, Eastern (31-1, 10-0 Little East), won the battle of undefeated LEC teams by defeating Rhode Island (15-12, 6-2 Little East) for the tenth time in the last 11 meetings between the programs. Eastern is 36-2 in its last 38 LEC regular-season games.

Rathbun (20-1) pitched a complete-game one-hitter in the opener with eight strikeouts and no walks in the first game, and retired all 15 batter that she faced to pick up the second-game win in relief of junior starter **Kassondra Silva (Hamden)**. Rathbun fanned 11 in 11 innings on the day to move to within four of her 1,000th career strikeout. She extended her consecutive inning streak without allowing an earned run to 42 2/3 innings, 9 1/3 shy of her program record. She She has allowed earned runs in only three of 27 appearances this season.

Rathbun extended her hitting streak with a two-run home run in the first game and a third-inning double in the nightcap for her only hits of the day. Cooper had two singles in the opener and contributed a two-run single in the second game to prolong her record hitting streak.

Senior rightfielder **Priscilla Alicea (Stratford)** collected four hits on the afternoon (two doubles) and drove in two runs to move to within three of breaking the 20-year-old program career record of 192.

Junior first baseman **Kelly Paterson (Southington)** doubled and hit her first career home run while batting ninth in the order in the first game and finished with three hits on the day.

Junior first baseman Emily Johnson (West Kingston, RI) had Rhode Island's only hit of the first game – a two-strike opposite-field single down the right field line leading off the second inning. Freshman leftfielder Taylor Nelson (Wareham, MA) recorded two of her team's four hits in the second game, reaching on an infield hit and scoring in the third on junior second baseman Marisa Jandreau's (Plainville) single to tie the game 2-2.

The Warriors broke the 2-2 tie in the second game by scoring twice in the fourth and three times in the sixth. Cooper's two-out single made it 4-2 in the fourth and Paterson singled in the first run of the sixth and Alicea doubled in the final two.

Eastern hosts Western Connecticut State University Tuesday in a 5 p.m. Little East Conference doubleheader. A ceremony officially recognizing the new field will be staged before the first game.

Wednesday, April 18, 2012

EASTERN SOFTBALL SETS PROGRAM CONSECUTIVE WIN RECORD

Rathbun wins 17th straight decision and Warriors set mark with 28th straight triumph

NORTH DARTMOUTH, Mass. – Senior righty **Molly Rathbun (Hebron)** pitched a complete-game six-inning one-hitter in the first game to lower her nation-leading ERA to 0.35 and the No. 3 ranked Eastern Connecticut State University women's softball team swept a Wednesday afternoon Little East Conference doubleheader from the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, 8-0 in six innings and 6-2 to break the program's 24-year-old record for consecutive wins.

Rathbun (18-1) won her 17th straight game in the opener with 13 strikeouts (moving within 15 of 1,000 in her career) and no walks and junior righty Christine Akcer (Milford) won her second game in her last two appearances as the Warriors posted their 28th straight win, breaking the mark set by the 1988 regional championship team.

Ranked No. 1 in New England, Eastern avenged its only loss of the season three days ago when Rathbun tossed a perfect game in a 4-0 victory over Tufts University. Earlier Wednesday, Rathbun was selected as the Division III Player-of-the-Week by the National Fastpitch Coaches' Association.

Junior third baseman **Arielle Cooper (Mystic)** extended her program record by hitting in her 21st straight with two hits and two RBI in the opener and one hit (a three-run triple) in the second game. She doubled twice and tripled in the doubleheader.

Akcer (five innings) and junior righty **Kassondra Silva (Hamden)** combined on six-hitter in the second game. Each spaced three hits and fanned two.

In the doubleheader, junior infielder **Kelly Paterson (Southington)** drove in three runs and scored two with two hits and sophomore second baseman **Jen Tamindzija (Malden, MA)** and Cooper each had three hits. Tamindzija doubled twice and scored two runs with an RBI. Senior rightfielder **Priscilla Alicea (Stratford)** had a hit to move to within seven of establishing a career hit record.

Eastern (29-1, 8-0 Little East) has won 34 of its last 36 regular-season conference games. UMass Dartmouth is 8-16 overall, 3-5 in the LEC)

Tuesday, April 17, 2012

EASTERN SOFTBALL SWEEPS CGA; STREAK REACHES 26
Cooper sets program mark by hitting in 19 straight games in 7-0, 5-4 victories

MANSFIELD, Conn. -- National earned run average leader **Molly Rathbun (Hebron)** struck out 14 in eight scoreless innings and junior third baseman **Arielle Cooper (Mystic)** broke the program record for consecutive games with a hit as the Eastern Connecticut State University softball team extended its winning streak to 26 with 7-0, 5-4 wins over the U.S. Coast Guard Academy Tuesday night at the Eastern Softball Field.

Rathbun (17-1) won her 16th straight decision with a complete-game two-hitter in the opener for her 42nd career shutout, then fanned two in a scoreless seventh in the nightcap for her fourth save. Rathbun lowered her national-leading ERA to 0.38. She also entered the week ranked second nationally in least hits allowed per game (2.86), and was third in strikeouts per game (11.4) and shutouts (7) and fifth in total strikeouts (167).

Cooper tied current assistant coach Tammy Schondelmayer's program record for consecutive games with a hit with a second-inning single in the opener and broke the record by tripling in the first inning of the nightcap – her 19th straight game with a hit. In those 19 games, Cooper is batting (.476) with five home runs and 53 total bases. Twelve times in 19 games she had exactly one hit.

Cooper, Rathbun, sophomore **Mattie Brett (Waterford)**, and freshman **Shannon Martin (Wethersfield)** all had three of Eastern's (27-1) two-game total of 20 hits. Cooper, Martin, sophomore **Megan Godwin (Manchester)** and freshman **Sam Rossetti (Shelton)** each drove in two runs and Cooper and senior **Priscilla Alicea (Stratford)** both scored three runs.

Eastern scored five runs in the first two innings of the opener, with Alicea, Martin (2) and Godwin all driving in runs. Rossetti plated also plated a pair in the fourth with a single.

In the second game, Coast Guard (18-14) first-game loser Catherine Walker pitched three scoreless innings and the Bears led 4-1 before the Warriors scored once in the fourth and four in the fifth on five hits and two errors to go ahead. Cooper plated the first two win a single, sophomore **Jen Tamindzija (Malden, MA)** tied the game with a sacrifice fly, and Godwin delivered the game-winning hit with a two-out RBI single.

Junior **Christine Akcer (Milford)** allowed one run on four hits in relief of junior starter **Kassandra Silva (Hamden)** to record her first win in her first decision this year. Akcer fanned three without a walk.

Sophomore Kaitlin Ward had three of Coast Guard's nine hits in the opener. Ward and freshman Kelsey Gray each drove in two runs.

Coast Guard is playing without All-America pitcher Hayley Feindel, who is out with a broken finger.

Eastern needs two wins to break the program record of 27, set in 1988. The Warriors visit UMass Dartmouth Wednesday for a 3:30 p.m. Little East Conference doubleheader.

Sunday, April 15, 2012

EASTERN'S RATHBUN ATTAINS SOFTBALL PERFECT, 4-0
Against New England's top-ranked team, she retires all 21 batters in order

WELLESLEY, Mass. – Eastern Connecticut State University senior All-America **Molly Rathbun (Hebron)** tossed the program's second perfect game and drove in the first three runs with a home run and two-run double to lead the Warriors past Tufts University – New England's No. 1 ranked team – by a score of 4-0 Sunday afternoon at Wellesley College.

Eastern (25-1), ranked second in New England and third in Division III, won its 24th straight game (three behind the program record) later in the day with an 11-2, five-inning victory over Wellesley College.

Rathbun (16-1) won her 15th straight game by avenging her only loss of the season against Tufts (24-4), ranked 11th nationally. Rathbun fired her first perfect game and eighth career no-hitter (second all-time in program history) by retiring all 21 batters in order. She fanned seven and allowed only two balls out of the infield, both off the bat of junior Emily Beinecke who flew out to sophomore centerfielder **Mattie Brett (Waterford)** to end the fourth and to senior rightfielder **Priscilla Alicea (Stratford)** to end the game.

Rathbun needed only 76 pitches over an hour and 35 minutes to dispose of the Jumbos, who had beaten Rathbun and the Warriors, 4-2, on March 19 in Clermont, FL in Rathbun's first start of the season. Sunday, she did not throw as many as three balls to any batter, throwing only 17 in all.

On Saturday, Rathbun carried a perfect game into the seventh inning against UMass Boston before settling for a one-hit victory. Only one of Rathbun's last 50 batters have managed a hit.

Rathbun drove in the only run she would need with a two-out solo home run in the first inning – her first of the season and 24th of her career -- then made it 3-0 with a two-out, two-run double in the fifth. Sophomore shortstop **Megan Godwin (Manchester)** drove in the final run with a two-out single in the sixth.

Against Wellesley (12-14), Eastern scored six times in the first inning to back the pitching of junior **Kassondra Silva (Hamden)**, who won her eighth decision without a loss by limiting the Blue to four hits over four innings.

Godwin, Brett and junior first baseman **Kelly Paterson (Southington)** all drove in two runs against Wellesley

(more)

Junior third baseman **Arielle Cooper (Mystic)** had a one-out, RBI double in the third inning against Wellesley to extend her hitting streak to 17, one shy of the program record set 23 years ago by current assistant coach Tammy Schondelmayer. Rathbun singled in the first inning against Wellesley to stretch her hitting streak to 13.

Until Sunday, the only perfect game in the program's 36-year history was thrown by Julie Bacher against Rowan University on March 18, 1985 in a 3-0 Eastern win. Rathbun had faced the minimum 18 batters in an 11-0 win over Rhode Island College in the second round of last year's NCAA tournament, but had to settle for a no-hitter due to a leadoff infield error in the second inning. The next batter hit into a double play, started by Rathbun.

Eastern hosts the U.S. Coast Guard Academy Tuesday in a 4 p.m. doubleheader. Rathbun and the Warriors had won the 2010 NCAA regional tournament at Wellesley with a 1-0 victory over Coast Guard.

Saturday, April 14, 2012

Softball

Eastern Sweeps UMass Boston 6-0, 7-0

BOSTON, Mass. – Senior All-America **Molly Rathbun (Hebron)** settled for a one-hitter with 17 strikeouts after throwing a perfect game through six innings and junior **Kassondra Silva (Hamden)** tossed a five-hitter in the nightcap for her second straight shutout as the Eastern Connecticut State University softball team extended its winning streak to 22 with a 6-0, 7-0 Little East Conference sweep of the University of Massachusetts Boston Saturday afternoon at the Clark Athletic Center field.

Ranked No. 3 nationally, Eastern (23-1, 6-0 Little East) has won 32 of its last 34 conference games over three seasons and remains unbeaten up north in 12 outings. UMass (13-11, 1-5 Little East) managed six hits and two walks and fanned 20 times in the twinbill.

In the doubleheader, junior third baseman **Arielle Cooper (Mystic)**, sophomore shortstop **Megan Godwin (Manchester)** and Rathbun each had four hits, with Silva and senior rightfielder **Priscilla Alicea (Stratford)** collecting three each. Godwin homered, drove in four runs and scored two and Silva plated three runs.

Rathbun, who has twice fanned a program record 18 in a game, struck out the first seven batters in the opener and later fanned four in a row before leadoff hitter Sue Killilea tripled leading off the seventh inning. Rathbun left her stranded with two strikeouts and a popup to first.

Batting ninth, Godwin was 4-for-4 with three RBI and hit her first home run of the year in the first game, while Cooper and Alicea each recorded three hits in Eastern's 15-hit attack in Game 1. In the nightcap, Rathbun and Silva each had two hits in the Warriors' seven-hit attack. Cooper, the leadoff hitter, singled leading off the second game to extend her hitting streak to 15 – three shy of current assistant coach Tammy Schondelmayer's program record, set 23 years ago. Rathbun is had a hit in her last 11 games.

Rathbun (14-1) has won 13 straight this year and is unbeaten in her last 36 regular-season northern decisions, and improved to 85-12 lifetime with 951 strikeouts in 654.0 innings. Silva (7-0) gave up five hits and two walks in the second game on the way to her second shutout in the last two starts and upped her career record at Eastern to 9-1.

Ranked No. 2 in New England, Eastern faces Tufts University (1 p.m.) and Wellesley College (3 p.m.) Sunday at Wellesley, MA. Tufts, ranked first in New England is the only team to beat Eastern this year, posting a 4-2 victory in the Warriors' second game of the year March 19 at Clermont, FL.

Thursday, April 12, 2012

EASTERN SOFTBALL SWEEPS BRANDEIS; WIN STREAK AT 20
No. 3 Warriors remains unbeaten up north with 6-3, 9-0 victories; now 12-0 up north

MANFIELD, Conn. – Senior pitcher **Molly Rathbun (Hebron)** and junior pitcher **Kassondra Silva (Hamden)** each went the distance, allowing only one earned run while fanning 17 and walking two as the Eastern Connecticut State University softball team swept Brandeis University, 6-3, 9-0 in five innings Thursday night at the Eastern Softball Field.

Rathbun (14-1) won her 13th straight decision in the opener, fanning 13 and walking one and allowing four hits. Silva (6-0) threw her first shutout of the season, second of her two-year career, giving up two hits with four strikeouts and a walk as Eastern extended its winning streak to 20 with its 11th and 12th straight northern victories.

Eastern (21-1) had 14 hits against three Brandeis (15-11) pitchers. Rathbun improved to 3-0 lifetime against the Judges, whom she defeated as a sophomore in the regular season once and in a shutout in the NCAA Division III regional tournament at Wellesley, Mass.

Ranked No.3 in Division III, Eastern moved to within seven of tying the program's all-time consecutive winning streak, set in 1988.

In the doubleheader, Rathbun drove in seven runs with three hits and a sacrifice fly; Silva, junior infielder **Kelly Paterson (Southington)**, junior third baseman **Arielle Cooper (Mystic)** and freshman outfielder **Shannon Martin (Wethersfield)** each had two hits. Cooper also walked three times scored three runs. Sophomore shortstop **Megan Godwin (Manchester)** reached three times with walks and scored three runs and drove in a pair, as did Paterson.

Senior rightfielder **Priscilla Alicea (Stratford)** doubled leading off the sixth inning of the opener for her 177th career hit, which moves her into a share of second place 15 behind all-time leader Leanne Shoop.

Senior first baseman Marianne Specker collected three of her team's six hits.

Eastern visits Massachusetts Boston Saturday at 1 p.m. in a Little East Conference twinbill.

Tuesday, April 10, 2012

Softball at Mansfield, Conn. Eastern Conn. 5, Trinity College 0 Eastern Conn. 9, Trinity College 6

MANSFIELD, Conn. -- The Eastern Connecticut State University softball team won its 17th and 18th straight games Tuesday night with 5-0, 9-6 triumphs over Trinity College at the Eastern Softball Field.

Eastern's (19-1) winning streak is the second-longest in program history behind the record 27-game streak set by the 1988 team which won its first 24 northern games and finished 35-7.

Senior right-hander **Molly Rathbun (Hebron)** won her 12th straight decision and 13th in 14 decisions this year with her fifth shutout of the season in the opener, then struck out two in the seventh inning of the nightcap for her third save to preserve the first collegiate win of freshman righty **Erin Miller (Waterford)**. In the doubleheader, Rathbun fanned 13 in eight shutout innings and allowed five hits and one walk for Eastern, ranked No. 4 nationally.

In her third collegiate appearance, Miller relieved junior starter **Kassondra Silva (Hamden)** in the third inning of the nightcap while Trinity (8-11) was scoring three runs to cut a five-run deficit to two. Miller allowed four hits, three walks and three runs (one canred) in 3 2/3 innings.

In the sweep which keeps Eastern unbeaten in six home games this year on its new facility, freshman **Shannon Martin (Wethersfield)** had three hits and knocked in three runs in her first two career starts with a two-run single in the opener and a ground ball which plated one run in Eastern's three-run first inning in the second game. Junior **Priscilla Alicea (Stratford)** also had three hits, including a double and triple, scored three runs and drove in two. Junior **Arielle Cooper (Mystic)** had two hits, including a triple, and plated two runs and scored two. Freshman **Jacqui Alvarado (Bay Shore, NY)**, and sophomores **Jen Tamindzija (Malden, MA)** and **Mattie Brett (Waterford)** also contributed two hits and Miller plated two key runs with a single in the sixth inning of the second game after the Bantams had pulled to within 7-6.

In addition to Miller, Alicea and Cooper both plated two runs in a second game where the Bantams twice cut into the Warriors' early five-run lead by scoring three times in the third and three times in the sixth. In the second game, Alicea walked and scored in a three-run first inning, drove in a run with a single in a two-run second, and tripled in a run and scored in a two-run fourth. Cooper tripled in the first two runs of the game and scored the third in the first inning of Game 2.

Abigail Ostrom and Kerry McCarthy each had four hits for Trinity, which has lost its last eight to Eastern. Christina Galese had three hits and scored twice.

Erin Miller is Eastern's starting pitcher and ranked second nationally in ERA and least hits per game, and third in strikeouts per game, and Cooper was rated ninth in home runs per game.

Eastern hosts Brandeis University Thursday at 4 p.m. in a doubleheader.

Saturday, April 7, 2012

EASTERN SOFTBALL EXTENDS WIN STREAK TO 16 WITH SWEEP

Warriors improve to 4-0 in Little East Conference with 9-2, 10-3 victories; now 17-1 on season

KEENE, N.H. – Junior third baseman **Arielle Cooper (Mystic)** hit her 18th and 19 career home runs in the opener to back senior All-America **Molly Rathbun's (Hebron)** 33rd consecutive regular-season northern pitching win when the Eastern Connecticut State University softball team extended its current win streak to 16 games with 9-2, 10-3 triumphs over Keene State College Saturday afternoon at the Owl Athletic Complex.

Ranked No. 4 nationally, Eastern (17-1, 4-0 Little East) equaled the program's third-longest winning streak with its 16th straight one, 11 behind the all-time mark and one shy of its second-longest streak, set a year ago. Eastern is 8-0 up north and has beaten Keene (10-4, 0-2 Little East) the last six times the teams have meet. Rathbun remained undefeated in six lifetime decisions against Keene.

Rathbun (12-1), now 41-2 in her career in regular-season northern games, set the program record for innings pitched (632.0) and recorded her 900th career strikeout in the doubleheader. Rathbun pitched a complete-game four-hitter with ten strikeouts and no walks for her 11th straight win in the first game and wrapped up the second-game victory with 1 2/3 hitless innings with three strikeouts in the second game. Rathbun did not allow an earned run on the day in lowering her season ERA to 0.48.

Cooper, second all-time to Rathbun's 23 career home runs, had three hits in each game, scored five runs and drove in two. Rathbun reached safely six times on the day with five singles and a walk and drove in five runs. Rathbun leads Eastern with a .426 average and with 13 RBI. Cooper follows at .415 with a team-leading six home runs (five in the last eight games), 27 hits and 53 total bases and is second to Rathbun with 12 RBI.

Three Eastern pitchers did not allow an earned run on the day and combined for 14 strikeouts and three walks. Junior righty **Kassondra Silva (Hamden)** hiked her record to 5-0 by pitching the first four innings of the nightcap. She was charged with three unearned runs while fanning one and walking one.

Ten batters collected at least one hit on the afternoon off five Keene State pitchers. Sophomore shortstop **Megan Godwin (Manchester)** and senior rightfielder **Priscilla Alicea (Stratford)** each had three hits and sophomore centerfielder **Mattie Brett (Waterford)** reached four times with a hit, two walks and a hit-by-pitch.

Eastern hosts Trinity College Tuesday in a 4 p.m. non-conference doubleheader.

Tuesday, April 3, 2012

Softball

Eastern sweeps Springfield College, 4-1, 4-0

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. – The Eastern Connecticut State University softball team, ranked No. 4 nationally, ran its winning streak to 14 straight with 4-1, 4-0 wins over Springfield College Tuesday afternoon at Potter Field.

Eastern (15-1) equaled its fifth longest winning streak in program history by defeating Springfield (8-7) for the eighth and ninth consecutive times in this series.

Senior All-America **Molly Rathbun (Hebron)** struck out 11 and walked one without allowing an earned run in a route-going effort in the first game to gain her 11th win in 12 decisions this year. Junior **Kassondra Silva (Hamden)** improved her record to 4-0 by winning the second game with four innings of relief in place of junior starter **Christine Akcer (Milford)** to complete the staff's sixth shutout of the season. Both Silva and Akcer each allowed three hits and a walk and fanned one.

Junior third baseman **Arielle Cooper (Mystic)** had three of Eastern's 15 hits in the doubleheader, with senior outfielder **Priscilla Alicea (Stratford)**, sophomore outfielders **Stephanie Johnson (Southington)** and **Mattie Brett (Waterford)** and Rathbun each chipping in two hits. Brett stole two bases, drove in two runs and scored three runs and Johnson knocked in two runs.

Cooper blasted her 17th career home run leading off the first game – the 100th hit of her career. Cooper also opened the second game with a single – the fifth straight game in which she has had a hit leading off the Eastern first inning. She has now homered leading off the Eastern first in two of the last four games.

After Cooper homered leading off the first inning of the first game, No. 9 hitter **Megan Godwin (Manchester)** plated Brett (single) with a two-out single to make it 2-0 in the second, and Godwin came around to score on an error to make it 3-0.

Eastern scored three times in the first inning of the nightcap on a two-out single by Brett and a two-out, two-run single by Johnson. Brett sent in the fourth run with an RBI single after Rathbun doubled to lead off the fifth.

Eastern visits Keene State College Saturday at 1 p.m. in a Little East Conference doubleheader.

Sunday, April 1, 2012

EASTERN SOFTBALL SWEEPS PLYMOUTH IN LEC OPENERS

Rathbun wins 80th career game in opener, reaches safely six times on the afternoon

MANSFIELD, Conn. – Senior **Molly Rathbun (Hebron)** won her 80th career game with a complete-game effort in the opener and reached safely in all six plate appearances on the day as the Eastern Connecticut State University softball team opened Little East Conference play with 3-2, 10-2 victories over Plymouth State University Sunday afternoon at the Eastern Softball Field. The second game was stopped in the sixth inning due to the eight-run rule.

Rathbun (10-1), a three-time All-America, struck out ten and walked one and gave up seven hits in the opening win for Eastern (13-1) to improve her career pitching record to 80-12. On the day, she was 4-for-4 with two walks.

The two-time defending LEC regular-season and playoff champion, No. 4 nationally-ranked Eastern has won 12 straight. Plymouth (3-11) has played all of its games on the road this season.

Junior infielder **Kelly Paterson (Southington)** had four hits and junior third baseman **Arielle Cooper (Mystic)** added three hits and scored three runs. She doubled and hit her 16th career home run in the first game and reached on an infield single for her 99th career hit in the first inning of the nightcap.

In her third career at-bat, freshman **Shannon Martin (Wethersfield)** made her first hit a home run. As a pinch-hitter, she drilled a two-run shot to right in a four-run fourth inning in the nightcap.

Junior **Kassondra Silva (Hamden)** won her third game in three decisions this year in the nightcap. Silva pitched into the fifth inning and departed with a 9-1 lead. She allowed four hits while fanning one and walking two. Silva singled in the first two runs of the game in the first inning.

Four players combined to collect nine of the team's 12 hits on the day for Plymouth (3-11), which has dropped its last 14 to Eastern. Freshman pitcher Cynthia Barata (New Fairfield) had three hits, including her second home run which tied the first game, 1-1, in the second inning. She went the distance on the mound in the opener, giving up only six hits. Eastern snapped the 1-1 tie with two runs in the fifth on a leadoff single by Paterson and Cooper's third home run of the season – a line drive to left on a 1-0 pitch.

Junior DH Jenn Bove (Medford, MA), sophomore first baseman/catcher Sam Hebert (Manchester, NH) and sophomore shortstop Bekah Jackson (Nashua, NH) all contributed two hits on the day for the Panthers, with Jackson scoring two runs.

Eastern visits Springfield College Tuesday at 3:30 p.m

Tuesday, March 27, 2012

IN FIRST HOME GAMES SINCE 2009, EASTERN SOFTBALL SWEEPS

Silva, Cooper, Rathbun stand out as Warriors stretch winning streak to ten with 9-0, 3-1 wins

MANSFIELD, Conn. -- Senior **Kassondra Silva (Hamden)** came within an out of her first complete game since 2010 in the nightcap and hit her first home run among three hits on the day ended the opener as Eastern Connecticut State University opened its new campus field with a 9-0, 3-1 non-conference softball sweep of Salve Regina University Tuesday at the Mansfield Outdoor Complex.

Silva's two-run home run -- the first of her collegiate career -- with nobody out in the bottom of the sixth inning ended the opening contest due to the eight-run rule.

The home games were the first for all but four seniors for Eastern (11-1), which had swept six doubleheaders the past two seasons playing at the University of Connecticut while the current facility was being built.

The Warriors, ranked fifth nationally and second in New England, have won ten straight while Salve (7-7) had a four-game winning streak snapped with its first losses since returning from its Florida trip.

Senior All-America **Molly Rathbun (Hebron)** shut out the Seahawks on two hits -- a third-inning infield hit with two out and a clean single to right by No. 8 hitter Kristen Parolise leading off the top of the sixth. Rathbun (9-1) established a program career record with her 38th shutout and moved to within one complete game of tying that program record. She struck out 11 without a walk in the opener.

Silva (2-0), who missed all of last year with an injury after lettering in 2010 following her transfer from the Division I level, spaced three singles in separate innings with four strikeouts and a walk before giving way to Rathbun, who got a game-ending called strikeout to strand the tying runs on base in the seventh. The save extended her program record to 12.

Ten different Salve players struck out at least once.

Led by junior third baseman **Arielle Cooper (Mystic)**, six Eastern players recorded at least two hits in the doubleheader. Cooper had a double, home run (her (the 15th of her career) and two singles in seven at-bats, scored two runs and drove in two. She moved to within four of 100 hits in her career.

Sophomore centerfielder **Mattie Brett (Waterford)**, Silva, senior rightfielder **Priscilla Alicea (Stratford)** and Rathbun all collected three hits, with freshman first baseman **Sam Rossette (Shelton)** contributing two.

Freshman rightfielder Laura Anne Dinan had two of Salve's five hits on the day and drew the team's only walk and scored its only run.

Eastern opens Little East Conference play Saturday at 1 p.m. by hosting Plymouth State University in a doubleheader.