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## 01/07/1986 - Lady Panthers Winning Record

University Marketing and Communications

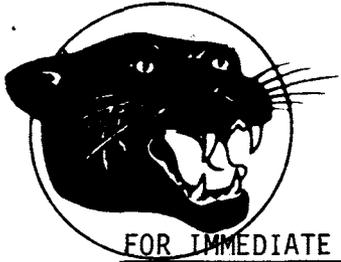
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# Panther Sports News

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CHARLESTON, IL (Jan. 7, 1986)--You gotta love it!! The electricity is running rampant on the Eastern Illinois campus at the recent accomplishments of the Lady Panthers basketball squad. EIU is sporting a nifty 9-2 record overall and a 2-0 mark in the Gateway Conference.

Coach Barbara Hilke's squad has a early-season showdown with conference nemesis Southern Illinois (78-46, 65-40) Saturday night (Jan. 11) at 7:30 p.m. at Lantz Gym. SIU won both contests a year ago and the Salukis are 15-0 against the Panthers. (NOTE: EIU plays at Illinois-Chicago on Jan. 7).

The Lady Panthers--winners of five straight at home--have been as red-hot as "Refrigerator" sweatshirts during Christmas in Chicago. EIU opened up loop action with convincing wins against Wichita State (95-80) and SW Missouri (86-70). In fact the Lady Panthers have been going for the KO against their last five opponents:

Here are the numbers (over the past five games): EIU is scoring at a clip of 87 ppg while holding opponents to 62.8 points an outing...The Lady Panthers are shooting an impressive .514 (185-360) from the field as compared to .450 (138-307) by their opponents...Eastern opponents are averaging 37.8 rebounds as compared to 36.8 by EIU (NOTE: On the entire season, EIU foes hold a commanding 42.4-35.6 rebounding advantage)...Opponents are turning the ball over nine times more a game (28.2-19.4)...Eastern has recorded 80 steals as compared to 32 for its opponents...EIU's average margin of victory is 24.2.

"Our team really has jelled over the past few games," explains Hilke. "We play very well as a team and within our selves. The players seem to know their capabilities.

"The game against Southern will be a good yardstick for where the team is at. SIU is a great team...with outstanding personnel. They are bigger than we are in the middle...the key will be if we can defense them properly and not let them control the tempo."

A pair of seniors for the Lady Panthers have been heading the EIU attack by playing perhaps the finest basketball of their storied careers. Forward CHRIS ALDRIDGE (Taylorville) is living up to her accolades of being an all-league pick a year ago. The 5-10, 160-pounder is pushing for a plethora of post-season honors--- including first-team All-Gateway and perhaps league Player-of-the-Year laurels.

## Women's Basketball

Add 1-1-1-0

She is averaging just shy of 20 points a game (19.9) and 6.5 rebounds a game; Aldridge leads the club in both categories. During the winning streak, she is hitting an impressive .563 from the field.

5-5 guard MELANIE HATFIELD (Lawrenceburg, Ind.) is the sparkplug of the squad. The Naismith Award candidate is second on the team in scoring with a 15.3 mark. Hatfield is ranked among the league leaders in assists (61), steals (52) and blocks (8). She has drawn the eyes of many opposing coaches as one of the most versatile players in the Midwest.

"I think Melanie and Chris are playing the best they have ever played since coming to Eastern," states Hilke. "They both want to have great senior seasons and are playing within themselves. Both of them are aware of the responsibility they have to the team."

The flashy play of Hatfield and Aldridge may have caught opposing coaches eyes...but the rest of the starting crew has earned the opposition's respect. Senior center SUE HYND (Ottawa) is chipping in 10 points a game for EIU. Her .511 field goal percentage is best among Eastern starters.

Freshmen LISA TYLER (Aurora, Ind./South Dearborn) and SHERYL BONSETT (Scottsburg, Ind.) may well be the surprise rookies in the league. The 5-11, 175-pound Tyler is an imposing force on the front line but has the delicate touch of a diamond cutter around the basket. She is averaging eight points and 5.6 rebounds a game.

Bonsett has been the Eastern floor general this season. She is averaging 8.5 points a game and is coming off a career-high 19 against Wichita State. The 5-6 guard is second on the club in assists (77) and in free throw shooting (.807).