

Eastern Illinois University

The Keep

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September

2023

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9-29-2023

## Daily Eastern News: September 20, 2023

Eastern Illinois University

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# THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

' T E L L   T H E   T R U T H   A N D   D O N ' T   B E   A F R A I D '



PHOTO BY ROB LE CATES | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

Members of the football team hoist the Mid-America Classic trophy to the student section after defeating the Illinois State University Redbirds 14-13 at O'Brien Field Saturday.

## STREAK BROKEN

*Panthers snap seven-year Classic skid against ISU Redbirds*

**By Zaria Flippin**  
Sports Editor | @DEN\_News

Eastern Illinois won the 111th Mid-American Classic at O'Brien Field on Saturday afternoon. The Panthers won the game against the 25th-ranked Illinois State Redbirds 14-13. In addition to gaining the Mid-American Classic trophy for the first time since 2016, the Panthers also beat a ranked opponent for the first time since 2017. "We're so excited to bring the Mid-American Classic trophy back to Charleston," Head Coach Chris Wilkerson said. In the second quarter, the Panthers were the first team to get on

the board. Graduate wide receiver Justin Thomas scored the first touchdown. Redshirt junior quarterback Pierce Holley found an open Thomas at the 15-yard line. Thomas caught the ball and ran into the end zone to record six points for the Panthers. Illinois State found its momentum when the team scored in the third quarter. Redshirt sophomore Wenkers Wight ran three yards for the Redbirds' first points of the game. With about four minutes left in the fourth quarter, junior running back Mason Blakemore ran for 12 yards to give the Redbirds another touchdown.

*"We're so excited to bring the Mid-American Classic trophy back to Charleston,"*

**- Chris Wilkerson**  
Head Football Coach

However, the extra point was no good as the ball hit the right post. With 75 seconds left in the fourth quarter, the Panthers marched down the field with commanding plays. Holley started the play with a pass to redshirt freshman running back MJ Flowers. Flowers ran for six yards to the Panthers' 13-yard line. On the next drive, redshirt junior tight end Anthony Manaves got the Panthers a first down by catching a pass from Holley. Junior wide receiver Eli Mirza ran for 13 yards after catching a pass from Holley to give the Panthers another first down.

Holley targeted Flowers again for a seven-yard gain. On the next play, Holley targets Thomas again, but the play resulted in an incomplete pass, a pass interference penalty and a targeting penalty on Redbird junior defensive backs CJ Hodgdon and Nigel White. The penalties resulted in a 15-yard gain for Eastern as they moved to ISU's 43-yard line. Holley targeted Mirza for a seven-yard gain to keep the momentum going for the Panthers. On the next play, Holley threw the ball to Flowers for an 11-yard gain to receive another first down.

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*Barnes comes off ACL injury*

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Panther Performance Festival ‘Abridged’

By Gunnar Olson  
Reporter | @DEN\_News

The student run showcase was a hit with the audience as all types of Eastern performers came out to shine on stage. The Panther Performance Festival, previously known as Up All Night, is an annual student run showcase. The festival was open to acts made up by Eastern students of all majors. The event is put on by the EIU Theater department in under two days. Over 30 student performers appeared on stage. They performed a plethora of acts that consisted of singing, dancing, poetry, monologues and comedic skits. One of the four artistic directors for the event Marie Mullinax a junior musical theater major, worked as the main tech runner for the night.

“It was a fun challenge,” said Mullinax. “It was definitely exciting because at Eastern we get to do a lot of behind the scene working shows, but to be able to run a complete show is an entirely different thing.” Mullinax also performed the song “Uninvited” as a duet with Emerson Gausmann, a senior vocal performance major. The two have not often gotten the chance to perform together, but they were able to this night. “I had this duet from a musical that I just really enjoyed, and I was like I just really want to do it with someone, and then I was like Panther Performance Fest,” said Gausmann. “This was my first year doing this and as a Senior graduating in May, I wish I would have done this event sooner.”

Although the Globe Studio is a smaller performance venue, every seat was packed for the show. A big hoot from the night came from



BY PRINCE PAPPOE | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

At the Panther Performance Festival, Abby Smith, an undecided freshman, and Megan Fox, a freshman theatre major, perform an act centered around a news updatemoon yoga practice Friday morning.

the multiple comedic performances. One of which was a parody sketch of the SNL sketch weekend update. Instead of covering national headlines as jokes Megan Fox, freshman theater major, and Abby Smith, freshman theater minor, decided to spin the sketch to talk about news happening at EIU.

Fox and Smith discussed multiple topics from frat bros to football. They hosted a segment talking about the things people have been posting on Yikyak, like “Has anyone seen the Bat flying around on Doudna?”

They also poked fun at everyone who has recently been using the community Snapchat stories to advertise their YouTube channels.

Another performance was a sketch entitled “The Music Man Abridged.” “We went upstairs, and we all start-

ed talking discussing ideas, and somehow it came up that all three of us had been in a prediction for the Music Man in high school,” said Ethan Vice, a freshman theatre major.

Thus, the idea was born to write a skit walking through each of the biggest moments from the musical.

Vice, along with Mitch Cox and Patience Beever, performed their comedic scene with fast paced transitions. Cox played the director, leading us the viewer through the performance. Just when Beever and Vice began a musical number there was Cox jumping in and yelling out “Moving on!”

Everyone showcased finished the night with a final bow met by a round of applause from the audience.

**Gunnar Olson can be reached at 581-2812 or at [gwolson2@eiu.edu](mailto:gwolson2@eiu.edu).**

FRONT PAGE COVER BY HARPER HANCOCK AND ROB LE CATES

September 20 - 27

**Wednesday**  
Special Events Rush Hour  
11 a.m. - 4 p.m. - MLK Jr. Union

**Thursday**  
Jazz Showcase Concert  
7:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. - Doudna Fine Arts Center

**Friday**  
Family Weekend Event Series  
6 p.m. - 10 p.m.  
Second City: Comedian Rhapsody  
7:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. - Doudna Fine Arts Center

**Saturday**  
Family Weekend Events  
9 a.m. - 10 p.m.  
Harvest Frolic Fall Celebration  
10 a.m. - 4 p.m. - Lincoln Log Cabin

**Sunday**  
**YOUR EVENT  
COULD  
GO HERE!**

**Monday**  
Career Week - Networking Night  
4 a.m. - 6 p.m. - Tarble Arts Center

**Tuesday**  
Career Week - Job Fair Prep  
11 a.m. - 1 p.m. - Lawrence Hall

**Wednesday**  
Fall Job & Internship Fair  
1 p.m. - 4 p.m. - Grand Ballroom, MLK Jr. Union  
Best Buddies: Basketball and Bags  
4 p.m. - 6 p.m. - McAfee Gym

Send your event information to [dennewsdesk@gmail.com](mailto:dennewsdesk@gmail.com) to be added to our online and print calendars!

# Two shootings, one alert

By T.J. Seputis  
Reporter | @DEN\_News

On Aug. 15, at around 3 p.m., shots rang out at Domino's on Lincoln Avenue.

The shooting prompted two Alert EIU notifications that were emailed to all students and staff. One Alert EIU message was sent at 3:22 and the other at 4 p.m.

The second alert added that information indicated the suspect was headed northbound. In a news release posted to Facebook at 4:34 p.m. the same day, the Charleston Police Department said that it had responded to the Domino's to investigate a report of a male shot in the arm. An update posted on Aug. 21 stated that a juvenile subject was put in custody.

Twelve days later, on Aug. 27, at 1:44 a.m., the sound of three gunshots could be heard to the north of campus, just over 800 feet away from Old Main.

There was no alert notification in reference to this shots fired incident unlike the Aug. 15 incident.

Police records show that upon arriving on scene, officers located three shell casings at the Millenium Apartments near Fourth Street and Buchanan Avenue.

A University Police Department officer located the suspect nine minutes after initial shots were fired. After a brief foot pursuit, two UPD officers arrested the suspect at the 1400 block of Fourth Street.

In the suspect's front sweatshirt pocket, officers found a Glock 27 firearm with an extended magazine in it, records said. The firearm had a round in the chamber and had been reported stolen by the Hammond Police Department, according to police records.

In an interview, UPD Police Chief Marisol Gamboa said an alert was not necessary for the Aug. 27 incident.

"We believe that it wasn't necessary to send that message out for that one," Gamboa said.

Gamboa said it was not deemed to be a safety risk for campus.

Gamboa stated the legal requirements for sending an alert notice in an email. "By federal law, EIU is only required to send emergency notifications if the event is currently occurring on or immediately threatening campus and only upon confirmation of the situation," Gamboa said.

Court records show the 20-year-old suspect, Jalon Lomax, was charged with four felonies including the use of a stolen firearm in the act of an offense. Lomax's bond was set at \$50,000, with 10 percent to apply. He posted on Aug. 30, with the court date set Sept. 25.

Alert EIU is part of a larger system called the Eastern Illinois University Campus Emergency Notification System. The system is composed of five means of communication including written forms of communication, coverage on the WEIU TV and radio platforms, a campuswide intercom system and a phone tree.

Alert EIU encompasses the text notification portion of the system, though any text is automatically sent as an email to all students and staff as well.

The purpose of the notification system is to advise students, faculty, staff and workers when there is a campus emergency.

Eastern's director of environmental health and emergency management, Kris Phipps, said the volume is intended to reach people on campus, no matter where they are.

A timely warning is a stipulation provided in the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act or Clery Act, according to Eastern's 2022's annual security report.



BY T.J. SEPUTIS | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

A University Police Department patrol car sits idly at the station moon yoga practice at Tarble Arts Center

In the event of a violent or criminal emergency, UPD is first in charge of sending out an alert. Should an officer respond to an emergency that may pose a risk to the campus, the officer is to report to UPD's first and second in command.

"The officers are responsible for notifying me or Lieutenant [Michael] Lusk, who's second in command, and then from there we determine if we are required by federal law to send out a message," Gamboa said.

Gamboa said that she has message templates preconfigured in order to allow for timely alerts in the event of an emergency. She said that following an alert of a dangerous situation, an all clear alert will be sent as well.

UPD officials will send out an alert when there is a critical situation that warrants stark timeliness and may involve immediate danger.

"As far as an active shooter situation,

we're not going to meet with everybody to see if we're going to send an email. We're just going to send it out," Gamboa said.

In other emergency situations, UPD officials may meet with other appointed university staff members to discuss the nature of the situation and how to notify campus, if at all.

Phipps said Eastern has both policy and incident management groups.

The policy group is composed of head officials of the university such as the president.

The emergency management team includes of the university police chief and a member of the Charleston Fire Department. The activation of either of these teams is dependent on the nature of the emergency.

**T.J. Seputis can be reached at [denewsdesk@gmail.com](mailto:denewsdesk@gmail.com).**

# Through the lens: New Moon Yoga



BY ASHANTI THOMAS | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

A variety of people such as students and Charleston community members join Raven McBride for her new moon yoga practice at Tarble Arts Center Friday morning.



BY ASHANTI THOMAS | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

From left, Terri Righter and Lois Lyons join in on new moon yoga for the first time and said that they enjoyed doing yoga outside and would try it again.

**Game Club**

Board games, card games classic strategy games. Fridays 5:00 - 9:00 pm at Jackson Avenue Coffee, 708 Jackson Avenue

**STORAGE UNIT SALES**

1385 Beech Tree Rd, Charleston, IL 61920.  
10/09/2023 6:00 PM Storage Unit Sale.  
Facility: Midwest Storage, LLC.  
Name/Unit: Amber J Daniell, Unit 4.  
In person Sale. Contact: 779-235-0007.

605 Piatt Avenue, Mattoon, IL 61938.  
10/09/2023 7:00 PM Storage Unit Sale.  
Facility: Midwest Storage, LLC.  
Name/Unit: Greg Rostek, Unit 19.  
In person Sale. Contact: 779-235-0007.



FILE | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

EDITORIAL

# Inform students, even if deemed ‘safe’

In a story by *The News*, one of our reporters explored Alert EIU.

The alert system is part of a larger system called the Eastern Illinois University Campus Emergency Notification System, which is composed of five different means of communication including written forms of communication, coverage on WEIU TV and radio platforms, a campuswide intercom system and a phone tree.

On Aug. 15, at around 3 p.m., a message was sent out saying shots were fired at Domino’s Pizza across the street from Old Main. Twelve days later, on Aug. 27 at 1:44 a.m. the University Police Department responded to shots-fired call at Fourth Street and Buchanan Avenue.

Three shell casings were found at the Millennium Apartments which is

less than a quarter mile walk to campus according to the complex’s website.

No alert was sent out despite the incident being around 800 feet from Old Main.

In an interview with UPD Police Chief Marisol Gamboa, she said an alert was not necessary for the incident.

In an interview, Gamboa stated the legal requirements for sending an alert notice in an email. “By federal law, EIU is only required to send emergency notifications if the event is currently occurring on or immediately threatening campus and only upon confirmation of the situation,” Gamboa said.

This lapse in judgment shocked us at *The News*. With so many fatal

shootings happening on college campuses across the country, students are afraid our campus might be next.

Just a day after the most recent shots-fired incident, a professor was shot and killed at the University of North Carolina- Chapel Hill. The shooter killed the professor using a 9mm handgun. Students were in hiding for two hours and 40 minutes.

The shooter near campus used a Glock 27 and hid it in his front sweatshirt pocket. The firearm was concealable and could have been snuck onto campus easily. While no one was reportedly injured, there was certainly potential.

We at *The News* believe students should have been notified for this incident the same as the Domino’s one was.

While there may be no legal obligation to send an alert, think about the obligation to the students to keep them informed.

No matter what is deemed to be a safety risk or not, information is key. Even if there was no active situation, people should have still avoided the area in case a situation was to arise.

People need to be aware of events that happen even if they are not directly on campus.

Students deserve to know what is going on even if a situation is deemed safe. Letting students sit in silence instead of notifying us will only cause more anxiety about what is potentially happening. Point, blank, period.

***The Editorial Board can be reached at 581-2812.***



COLUMN

# Is Pluto a planet?

No.

By Dan Hahn  
Columnist



When my colleague and fellow DEN columnist Kiersten Budz told me that she believes, wholeheartedly, that Pluto should be a planet and that nothing could change her mind, I thought it would be fun to try and convince her otherwise.

Discovered in 1930, Pluto held the title of the ninth planet for many decades. Then in 2006, Pluto was controversially demoted to the status of a “dwarf planet” by the International Astronomical Union, or the IAU.

The reason is orbital. The eight planets that orbit our sun do so on a relatively flat plane. Pluto’s orbit, on the other hand, is noticeably inclined. Not only that, but there are vast intervals of time (most recently from 1979 to 1999), where Pluto is closer to the Sun than Neptune. How are we supposed to teach the order of the planets if it changes over time?

Because of this oddity, Wikipedia outlines that Pluto is more closely related with the orbits of trans-Neptunian objects and other Kuiper Belt objects, rather than the standard behavior of a planet.

Classifying Pluto as a planet would not only defy consistency but also undermine the credibility of astronomers and astrophysicists, such as Niel Degrass Tyson, who says on TikTok that people who want Pluto to be classified as a planet need to “get over it.”

Including Pluto as a planet would necessitate a reassessment and re-definition of orbital mechanics that define planethood.

As Eastern students, we are invested in institutions of higher education both financially and intellectually.

While I certainly believe it is acceptable to challenge authority, within reason, our future success as critical thinkers hinges on our ability to take in new information and adapt our viewpoints.

I’m no astronomer, and at the end of the day we need to respect both the authorities in the field and the academic rigor that leads to new discoveries. We cannot challenge authority just because we feel differently than the experts.

It would be hypocrisy if we did not acknowledge the consensus of the scientific community and the collective expertise that guided Pluto’s reclassification.

We must also acknowledge that classifying Pluto as a dwarf planet does not diminish its value. I am certain there are numerous, unimaginably wonderful discoveries that await us on Pluto, regardless of the nomenclature we use to categorize it.

Pluto’s reclassification as a dwarf planet is a testament to the adaptability and self-correcting nature of the scientific community, of which all good academics strive to belong to.

By respecting this decision, we prove ourselves to be adaptable and open to deeper understandings of our solar system and the cosmos at large.

Dan Hahn can be reached at [dhahn@eiu.edu](mailto:dhahn@eiu.edu) or 217-581-2812.

By Kierstyn Budz  
Columnist



If you have read my colleague and fellow columnist Dan Hahn’s column, you will know I believe wholeheartedly, Pluto is a planet. Nothing anyone can say, will change my mind.

Ever since I was a kid, I have had a love for space, it was one of my favorite subjects to learn about. I was only five when Pluto was demoted to a dwarf planet but even as a twenty-two-year-old, I still believe in its planethood.

I mean, it is still called a “dwarf planet” so the word planet is still in that demotion. I know, that is not very concrete proof, but why not just say “Oh it is no longer a planet, so we are just going to take it off the planet list and call it Pluto solely.”

Pluto also has five moons orbiting around it, which to me feels like it still should have its classification of a planet.

In the past, I have heard that any spherical, celestial body with moons orbiting around it can be considered a planet. I feel that makes sense and would be completely fine adding more planets. Just because these bodies are small, does not make them any less worthy for the title of planet.

In Dan’s article, he explains the fact that Pluto is sometimes closer to the Sun than Neptune, which does mess up the order of the standard planets. Though, this to me, does not

change the fact Pluto is still a planet.

Pluto is still one of the biggest objects in our solar system to orbit the Sun. Yes, there are other objects such as Eris that are bigger than Pluto, so I also believe Eris could also be classified as a planet.

I would not mind the addition of another planet considering that Eris does have the requirements to be a planet apart from it not being gravitationally strong as the other planets.

It almost feels like we are too afraid to just admit there is more than eight planets. Our knowledge of space is always expanding, so why are we so strict on this eight-planet rule?

Going back to Dan’s article, I know astronomers and astrophysicists are literally space scientists, but I will not “get over it” as said by Neil deGrasse Tyson on TikTok. I was always told to not believe everything you see on the internet so sorry Neil; I will not be getting over it.

On the topic of following what scientists stay, what about historians? We are so quick to believe everything scientists say but continuously challenge history textbooks and learn both sides rather than sticking to one point of view.

Why is this any different? As a society, we are so quick to believe everything on the internet or what apparent experts say.

Overall, do want the biggest piece of evidence? It is because I said so. We all have our right to our own opinion and mine will stick with Pluto to being a planet.

Kierstyn Budz can be reached at [krbudz@eiu.edu](mailto:krbudz@eiu.edu) or 217-581-2812.

GRAPHIC BY VERONICA GIPSON | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

# Welcome to healthy cooking 101

By **Sia Deykoontz**  
Reporter | @DEN\_News

Something's cooking in Klehm hall on Tuesday with healthy cooking 101, 18 students signed up for an experience with meat less cooking and nutrition for the first event of the semester.

Haley Sanders, a master student in nutrition and dietary, presented at the event in hopes to give students a chance to learn how to cook and get their protein in while on a busy schedule.

"Get people excited for healthy nutrition, some people do not know how to cook themselves or have the resources to do so," Sanders said. "[The Health Education Resource Center] put on these hands on experiences for students to learn, available for all students regardless of major."

The event contained two recipes and a presentation about how protein is important, along with how it is not just located in meat. There are other ways of getting protein from vegetables, fruits, grains, nuts and seeds.

The HERC program puts on helpful at home cooking events to promote healthy eating and nutrition for students who might not have experiences in the kitchen. Students got out

of their dorms to learn how to cook. They can then use that knowledge when they have a kitchen of their own.

Students enjoyed their own hands-on experiences of cooking.

Aylssa Herald, a junior nutrition and dietary major, attended the events with previous expedites and the passion for cooking.

"I love cooking and miss cooking, living in a dorm, I do not get a chance to be in a kitchen often, this gives me a chance to get experiences in a kitchen," Herald said. "It is very relaxing, and you get to experience the end yard of I did that."

Herald's grandma taught her how to cook by attending these events brings her back to those memories of being home.

These recipes can be cooked in ten minutes or less.

Ingredients for skillet elute include: 2 cans of corn, 2 tablespoons of mayo, 1 tablespoon of lime juice, 1.5 teaspoons of chili powder, 3 tablespoons of cotija cheese

Directions

1: Whisk mayo, lime juice and chili powder in a bowl until combined set aside

2: Heat large skillet over medium-high heat. Add corn and cook



BY ASHANTI THOMAS | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

Healthy Cooking 101 promotes healthy cooking habits presented by the HERC. In Klehm Hall Tuesday evening, where students had the opportunity make meatless tacos and elote.

for 5 minutes without stirring. Toss around with a spatula and cook until corn has started to brown. After about three minutes, remove from heat

3: Add mayo mixture and stir until evenly combined. Sprinkle cotija cheese and more chili powder if wanted.

Ingredients for the meatless tacos include: Tortillas, Spanish rice, Black beans, bell pepper, cheese, lettuce

Directions:

1: Cook black beans according to instruction on the can

2: cook rice according to the packaging

3: chop bell peppers

4: warm toco shells on stove top

5: assemble with toppings you want

**Sia Deykoontz can be reached at 5811-2812 or at [smdeykoontz@eiu.edu](mailto:smdeykoontz@eiu.edu).**



# THANK YOU!

## You made the day!

To the hundreds of EIU Friends-For-A-Day and event volunteers who spent Saturday, Sept. 16 at Special Olympics Family Festival

### Viva La SOFF

*Celebrating 40 years of SOFF memories*

From the participants of the 2023 Special Olympics Family Festival.



Mark your calendar for next year's event on September 21, 2024.

HOSTED BY



# Panthers win Mid-American Classic at home opener

## Jump from cover

Holley spiked the ball on the next play to stop the clock and give the offense more time to figure out what to do for the next play.

Graduate wide receiver Justin Thomas runs into the end zone to score the first touchdown of the game during the Mid-America Classic game against the Redbirds at O'Brien Field Saturday. Thomas scored two touchdowns and ran for 80 yards. The Panthers won 14-13. (Rob Le Cates)

On second down, Holley threw a 25-yard pass to Thomas.

Thomas caught it in the end zone to score his second touchdown of the day and to tie with the Redbirds.

"[The team] trusted me when they needed me, and I couldn't be more thankful," Thomas said.

Redshirt sophomore kicker Julian Patiño kicked the extra point and put the Panthers on top with 60 seconds left.

After his second touchdown, Thomas wasn't thinking about the previous play at all.

"I was just thinking, 'Defense, you got 30 seconds,'" Thomas said. "Make a stop. No points."

On the third play of the Redbirds' drive, redshirt senior quarterback Zack Annexstad threw an interception to Panthers' redshirt sophomore Blake Ruffin to seal the win for the Panthers.

"I was thinking, 'Hold on to the ball,'" Ruffin said when he stopped the Redbirds' drive.

Ruffin led the Panthers with nine tackles.

Eastern's defense recorded three interceptions from redshirt junior defensive back Mark Aitken, fifth-year defensive back Russell Dandy and Ruffin.

"This win just feels surreal," Holley said. Holley ended the game going 35-of-48 for 273 yards, two touchdowns, and two interceptions.

Holley completed his first 20 passes of the game and broke the school record that was previously held by Sean Payton in 1986.

Thomas talked about what this win meant to him, and it wasn't all about the trophy.

"This was the 'flip the script' game," Thomas said.



Members of the Eastern Illinois University football team post with the Mid-America Classic trophy after defeating the Illinois State University Redbirds 14-13 at O'Brien Field Saturday.

BY ROB LE CATES | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

**Zaria Flippin can be reached at 581-2812 or zhflippin@eiu.edu.**

## Athletes of the Issue

### GIOVANA LARREGUI LÓPEZ.



Senior outside hitter Giovana Larregui López killed the ball over the net before any opposing players could keep the play alive on the last play of the night during volleyball's first game against Mizzou.

Larregui López led the Panthers in kills on Thursday's game with 15 kills, to help secure the win 3-0.

### JUSTIN THOMAS



Graduate wide receiver Justin Thomas scored two touchdowns, one of them with less than 36 seconds left in the fourth quarter.

Quarterback Pierce Holley threw a 25-yard touchdown pass to Thomas to record an additional six points.

The Panthers held off the Illinois State Redbirds 14-13 to win the Mid-American Classic for the first time since 2016.

# VB pre OVC Takeaways

By Zaria Flippin  
Sports Editor | @zariaflippin

Eastern volleyball is heading into the Ohio Valley Conference with a 10-1 non-conference record.

Here are some takeaways about the Panthers' performance in their first 11 games of the season:

**1. The Panthers swept six of their opponents 3-0.**

Eastern did not let their opponents score in six of the 11 games during non-conference play.

Louisiana Monroe, Oral Roberts, UC Riverside, Arkansas State, Alabama A&M and Missouri (Sept. 14) did not win a set against the Panthers.

**2. The Panthers went on a historical 10 game winning streak to start the season.**

Eastern started their season 10-0. This was the best start for Eastern volleyball in program history.

The Panthers' only loss of the non-conference season was to the Mizzou Tigers on Friday, Sept. 15. The Panthers lost to the Tigers 3-1.

**3. Eastern players won MVP awards and tournament All-Tournament spots for all three tournaments they played.**

Graduate outside/opposite hitter Natalie Mitchem won the EIU Panther Classic MVP award.

Sophomore setter Catalina Rochaix and senior outside hitter Giovana Larregui



BY ROB LE CATES | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

Opposite/outside hitter Natalie Mitchem hits the ball over the net during the volleyball game against the University of Missouri Tigers Friday afternoon.

López joined Mitchem as All-Tournament Team selections.

Larregui López won the IUPUI Hampton Inn Invite MVP award.

Senior libero/defensive specialist Christina Martinez Mundo and sophomore middle blocker Kate Dean joined Larregui López for the All-Tournament selections.

Mitchem also won the Southern Illinois Saluki Bash MVP award after helping the Panthers record a 9-0 start.

Junior outside hitter Kaitlyn Flynn and Martinez Mundo were selected alongside Mitchem for the All-Tournament team.

**4. Eastern lost eight sets but won 31 sets in an 11-game span.**

The Panthers have only lost eight sets throughout 11 games. Eastern has won almost 80 percent of their sets throughout non-conference play.

Here are some players who are leading in stats for the Panthers:

- Kills: Natalie Mitchem (141) and Giovana Larregui López (128)
- Assists: Catalina Rochaix (377) and Sylvia Hasz (47)
- Service Aces: Giovana Larregui López (24) and Sylvia Hasz (20)
- Digs: Christina Martinez Mundo (213) and Giovana Larregui López (86)
- Blocks: Julia Stanev (36.0) and Natalie Mitchem (25.0)

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# Barnes improves after ACL injury

By Maurice Phipps  
Sports Reporter | @DEN\_news

Injuries are an unfortunate reality in the world of sports. Not many people know that more than Zenaya Barnes, a forward for the Eastern Illinois women's soccer team.

Barnes tore her ACL in her left knee in April 2022.

Barnes was sidelined for 10 months and returned to action last spring. A

normal ACL recovery can range from nine to 12 months.

"I was able to get games in during the spring," Barnes said. "Something that has helped me get back was staying on top of my rehab. Also reminding myself that I'm just getting back into playing so to not be so hard on myself."

Barnes also shouted out her teammates, citing their supportive words and willingness to fill in and step up for her as what kept her motivated throughout such a difficult process.

"They're patient when I make a mistake, and they're so supportive," Barnes said.

The coaches also made an impact on Barnes' recovery, including Head Coach Dirk Bennett and assistant coaches Deanna Hecht and Kayla Baird.

"Our head coach has been amazing," Barnes said. "He's been so patient and understanding with whatever I need when it comes to my injury. We have two new coaches on staff, and they also have supported me well throughout the length of my



FILE PHOTO

Zenaya Barnes, a 5th year forward, said it felt amazing to score her first goal back after tearing her ACL in 2022.

rehab. If I need a day off, it's okay. I'm the type of player to want to be at 100 percent and not put my team at risk so they help with that."

Barnes said her play style changed post-injury, and she noted that her play style would be described by others as "physical and aggressive."

Barnes said finding that aggressiveness would be something she'd have to work hard at getting back.

"Being able to use my body when I play lets me protect my knees and my ankles and my hips," Barnes said. "I think being more aggressive helps me protect the ball and my body."

Barnes spoke on how she kept her mental health stable through her injury.

"In the beginning, it was definitely hard," Barnes said. "Especially when I found out I tore it. This is my second ACL injury, so I know the grind that it takes to even be able to walk again and regain the range of motion. I know what milestones I should be at during this specific time of the injury. What kept me in it was the fact that I had done it before. I know I've put in the work before. It was hard mentally, and it's always going to be, but I had the right mindset, and I knew it would be okay."

Barnes scored her first goal back from her injury against the Chicago State Cou-

gars on Sunday, Sept. 10 at Lakeside Field.

Barnes talked about how it felt to score her first goal after the injury.

"It felt amazing," Barnes said. "It gave me the reassurance that I can do this. It gave me the confidence to keep going. I had scored in practice but scoring in the game was what told me I could keep moving forward and recovering and improving."

Barnes also touched on her team and her thoughts on the season.

"We have a solid team this year," Barnes said. "We're young but we have a lot of talent. We're improving every game and every practice and it's showing, so I feel pretty good about this team. Our freshmen came in mentally ready. We're all on the same page; it's awesome."

When asked about the season ahead, Barnes spoke with excitement for the future.

"Coach has plans for us," Barnes said. "I'm excited to get after it. More training, more fitness, more preparation. Doing what we need to do to be the best we can be."

Barnes' injury had left her feeling uncertain about her playing career.

Through her perseverance and hard work, she recovered from her injury.

Now, she's looking towards finishing out the season strong playing alongside her teammates.

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