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11/07/1980 - Coach Closes In On Starting Line Up

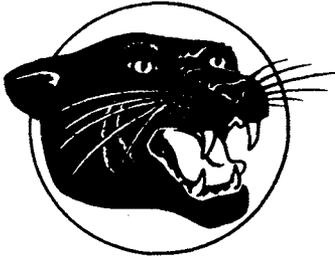
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Panther Sports News

EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY, Charleston, IL 61920

DAVID KIDWELL, *Sports Information Director*

OFFICE: (217) 581-2920 HOME: (217) 345-4166

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LS-AS-Basketball

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHARLESTON, IL--Eastern Illinois University basketball coach Rick Samuels is starting to close in on a starting lineup as the Panther basketball season looms just ahead.

Eastern will host Millikin on Saturday, November 22 in Lantz Gym.

"It's still too early to say we have a set starting lineup but the better players have made their presence known," said Samuels.

"Ricky Robinson (Aurora-East) is definitely one of the most talented . . . he's pointing towards a good season, and I think his outside shot has improved considerably over what people have seen previously.

"Jim Williams (Monticello) continues to demonstrate sound fundamentals, and has shown to be an opportunist . . . he's at the right place at the right time.

"Probably the biggest surprise is Leigh Hankins (South Beloit) . . . Hank's much more aggressive than I anticipated, and is working to become a solid defensive player.

"The returning players have done pretty well at guard . . . Chuck Turk (Maple Park-Kaneland), Warren Patten (Memphis, TN-Melrose/Westark, AR CC) and Rico Ellis (Chicago Heights-Bloom/Joliet JC). All three have exhibited good outside shooting ability."

Two new junior college transfers, Ricky Serkin (Belleville-Althoff/New Mexico CC) and Eddie Jones (Chicago-Cregier/Lincoln CC), have "made good progress. Serkin has a knack for getting the ball off the board, and he plays hard."

Samuels also expects two freshmen recruits, Mark Turner (South Bend, IN-Clay) and Tim Dykstra (Plymouth, IN-Laville), to make an impact.

"Dykstra has put on 20 lbs. since school started . . . the conditioning program really helped him . . . he's stronger, quicker and seems to jump better.

"Right now we're still learning the intricacies of our offense. The defense gets ahead

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of the offense normally, and then we have trouble running anything.

"Plus I'm not a scrimmage oriented coach . . . I like the players to be hungry for the games. Of course, we must be accustomed to transition play and get enough head-to-head contact to be ready, but I'd rather structure what we do than just go all out in scrimmages."