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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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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHARLESTON, IL--The Eastern Illinois University women cagers open their 1980-81 campaign when they face Southeast Missouri State at 1 p.m. Friday in the opening game of the River Roast Tournament to be held at St. Louis University Friday-Sunday (November 28-30).

The eight-team field includes Lewis University, Nebraska-Omaha, Missouri-Rolla, SIU-Edwardsville, Harris Stowe, Missouri-St. Louis, Southeast Missouri and Eastern Illinois.

Although the Panthers return as last year's champions, Coach Bobbie Hilke sees Nebraska-Omaha as the team to beat for the title this time around.

"UN-O has a distinct height advantage over us. They have one 6-6 sophomore, 6-1 and 6-0 forwards and a junior college all-star guard." Nebraska-Omaha is currently ranked 12th in the nation amongst Division II schools.

Probable starters for Hilke's Panthers are seniors Sandy Thorpe (Peoria/Central), JoAnn Archer (Mundelein) and Linda Ellsworth (Menasha, WI/Portage Central) along with sophomore guards Nancy Kassebaum (Belleville/East) and Kathy Lanter (Georgetown).

"I'm guessing that Southeast will play a zone again this year. If they do, we'll attack it with a 1-4 or "Z" offense which utilizes our post players better," said Hilke.

One of our biggest problems this year is our lack of rebounding power. However, it's early and no matter how it goes this weekend, we're not going to panic," said Hilke.

"We have a group of very confident shooters to work with. I'd like to think we have an excellent chance at placing first or second," said Hilke.

"This is definitely a very talented tournament, much more so than last year's. Unfortunately for us, it appears we're in a rather one-sided bracket," Hilke added.