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Panther Sports News

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHARLESTON, IL--The future may be brightening for Eastern Illinois University's women's cross country team.

The striders turned in a dismal showing--last place--at the Illinois State Invitational last weekend, but the squad may have fared better if not for injuries to two of EIU's top three runners.

A ray of light--and hope--broke through the clouds when senior captain Margaret Smith (Effingham-St. Anthony), who has not been able to compete due to a foot stress fracture, learned that she may begin jogging one mile per day this week.

In addition, freshman Teresa Paul (Aledo), who was sidelined with a sprained ankle at Illinois State is improving and may be able to compete Saturday (Sept. 24) when the women compete at the USA/TFA Mid-American Championships in Kenosha, WI.

Although Smith's earliest return is slated for Oct. 1, against Southern Illinois, had coach John Craft said Paul's return and optimism surrounding Smith's progress "has lifted my spirits already."

"We're just going to do our best this weekend and try to turn in some good times," he said. "We have a really young team and this meet will get them some experience in a big-time meet with good competition from 25 schools.

"We'll be eager to come back and start preparing for Southern," the only remaining home meet for the Panthers, Craft said.