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Panther Sports News

EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY, Charleston, IL 61920

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Feb. 23, 1982
LS-AS-Wrestling

Panther Wrestling Report

THE TOURNAMENT: Eastern Illinois (7-1) takes part in the NCAA I Midwest Regional Friday and Saturday (Feb. 26-27) at Louisiana State's LSU Fieldhouse in Baton Rouge, LA.

THE LINEUP:	118 Randy Blackman (15-7)	River Grove (East Leyden)
	126 Derek Porter (21-3)	Mims, FL (Titusville)
	134 Bernie Ruettiger (11-4)	Joliet (Providence)
	142 Rich Brown (12-5)	Franklin Park (East Leyden/Triton JC)
	150 Lester Robinson (10-8)	Chicago (Marshall)
	158 Mike Polz (13-1)	Riverside (Brookfield)
	167 Mark Gronowski (11-1)	Titusville, FL
	177 Dennis McCormick (18-6)	Springfield (Springfield)
	190 Geno Savegnago (21-2)	Carol Stream (Glenbard North)
	Hwt. Rich Magsamen (2-12)	Elk Grove Village (Elk Grove)

EIU FACTS: The Panthers are coming off an impressive day's work as they downed Southern Illinois-Carbondale and the University of Illinois last Thursday night (Feb. 18). Senior Geno Savegnago moved to within five victories of tying Dave Klemm's career wins mark of 129 with his 124th successful outing as a Panther. Derek Porter joined Savegnago as a 20-match winner Thursday, notching his 21st against Illinois' Phil Callahan. Thursday's dual wins were the Panthers fifth straight.

EIU EXPERIENCE: The Panthers are no strangers to the competition of post-season Division I wrestling. Despite this being Eastern's first season in NCAA Division I, four Panthers have wrestled at the upper division through qualifying in Division II championships. This will be Savegnago's fourth appearance in Division I post-season wrestling, while it will be the second time around for Polz, Gronowski and McCormick.

THE FIELD: The Regional, which will allow three qualifiers to advance to the Division I championship at each weight division, will consist of 14 teams. Leading the pack of entries are Northern Iowa, Indiana State and host LSU. Ten individuals which are ranked in Amateur Wrestling News' top ten will compete at the Midwest Regional.

RANKINGS: The Panthers have cracked the top 20, but just barely, in the Amateur Wrestling News final regular season poll. EIU is 20th with a 7-1 record and five straight dual victories.

PREMIER MATCHUP: Perhaps the best match in the regional will be at 190 pounds. Geno Savegnago is ranked No. 4 just behind Northern Iowa's No. 3 Kirk Myers. These two have met on five previous occasions with Savegnago winning three and Myers two.

COACH RON CLINTON SAYS: "Things couldn't be better at this point . . . we are at 100%, and everything is on a positive note now . . . the five straight wins have allowed our kids to wrestle with a lot of confidence . . . this should be Eastern's best showing at the Division I level since 1979 . . . this regional could very well be the toughest regional of them all . . . there are some outstanding

EIU WRESTLING
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COACH RON CLINTON SAYS: individuals going there . . . we could very conceivably
(CONTINUED) qualify anywhere from six to eight men in the championship
. . . our veterans at 118, 126, 158, 167, 177 and 190 should
have very good meets . . . it's nothing new to them
the classic match of the tournament will be at 190 if Geno
(Savegnago) and Kirk Myers get the chance to bump heads . . .
it will be a very emotional match for Geno . . . the sleeper
of the tournament could be Bernie Ruettiger at 134 . . . he
has wrestled very strong lately and it wouldn't surprise me
a bit if he were to qualify for the national championship."