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## 01/23/1984 - Jon Collins Redshirts

University Marketing and Communications

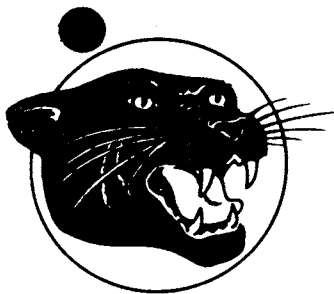
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# Panther Sports News

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHARLESTON, IL--Jon Collins (East St. Louis-Cahokia), Eastern Illinois University's 6-4 sophomore forward, got plenty of 'pine time' last winter being redshirted following his transfer from Northern Illinois.

That's the last year he'll spend on the bench as Collins, the Mid-Continent's second leading scorer at 19.5, is at or near the top of every EIU statistical category in his first year here on the job.

Assessing his progress at mid-season, Collins says, "The most difficult part after sitting out is getting the competitive edge back . . . the only way is to get right into game situations."

That he's done averaging 37 minutes per game with the 19.5 scoring average, team high 85.2% free throw accuracy, 53.4% from the field, 4.5 rebounds and 2.5 assists.

"I think I'm starting to get it back but I'm still not at the point I was defensively (at Northern) . . . I've had to concentrate more on the defensive end."

Collins had little trouble making the adjustment offensively as he scored 61 points and shot 67.8% from the field in the first three games in December, and was awarded the AMCU-8 'Player of the Week' honors.

"Coach (Rick) Samuels gives a player some freedom so it wasn't much trouble learning the offense. I think I'm shooting pretty well and I know my passing game is better," he said. "I've already had more assists here than in the whole season at Northern."

Samuels says, "It's obvious Jon has quickly proven to be an excellent offensive player, and is also very capable of playing a total game. His defense has been a surprise improvement, he goes to the board well and, in a couple of games, had quite a few assists. Because of the layoff, he still needs to improve his consistency but will as he becomes more familiar with his teammates and the surroundings."

During the holidays Collins slumped in both scoring and shooting percentage on a three game western swing and league opener at Wisconsin-Green Bay. He pinpointed a couple factors in that brief slide.

"The main thing was that teams were starting to look more often at stopping me . . . to deny me the ball. Then with all the road games you start thinking about the officiating when that goes against you. Now I've just decided not to let all that bother me."

Mind over matter must've worked because last week Collins bounced back by scoring 31 and 21 points, respectively, in road wins at Cleveland State and Valparaiso. EIU is again back over .500 at 7-6.

Two years ago at this time Collins broke into the starting lineup on NIU's NCAA tournament team but transferred here in the summer of 1982. "I was looking for something closer to home . . . but not where I would live at home.

"I had heard about some of the guys that were recruited here . . . like Tim Wyss, Kevin Duckworth . . . so I thought it would be a good place to play.

"We're pretty close as a team but I do have other interests off the court though mostly I like to watch TV and listen to music. My roommate and I are good friends. Although he's not on the team he played sports in high school so it's someone else to talk with who understands the game.

"Right now I just want to play an all-around game . . . and play unselfishly. I'm happy with the situation here."