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Panther Sports News

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Feb. 25, 1981

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHARLESTON, IL--Track athletes from 17 schools will fill Eastern Illinois University's Lantz Fieldhouse Saturday (February 28) to participate in the Lady Panther Invitational beginning at 11 a.m. The final event, the mile relay, is scheduled to run at 4:55 p.m.

"This is going to be an outstanding meet," said Panther coach John Craft. "For someone who enjoys watching really competitive women's track, this is the meet to see.

"Saturday's meet will be like a premier for the National Indoor Championships," said Craft.

Among those schools represented will be Illinois State, Loyola, Memphis State, Northwestern, SIU-Edwardsville, SIU-Carbondale, Kentucky, Southeast Missouri, Washington University, Chicago Circle, Northern Illinois, Purdue, Western Illinois, Western Kentucky, Arkansas and Illinois. The Terre Haute Track Club will also participate.

"Nobody will run away with the meet," said Craft. "I'd say the top five teams would have to be Illinois State, Purdue, Kentucky, Western and ourselves.

"Illinois and Arkansas are only bringing select people," said Craft. Becky Kaiser (Charleston) will be one of the entrants from Illinois. Arkansas will send only its mile relay team in an effort to qualify it for the Nationals next month in Pocatello, Idaho.

Although Eastern is still hampered by injuries, Craft expects outstanding performances from sprinters Mary Burroughs (Chicago/Harlan), Wanda Ball (Chicago/Hyde Park), Renee Johnson (Chicago/South Shore), Gail Stephens (Evanston), hurdler Mona Fowler (North Chicago) and long jumper Gayle Brandon (Danville).

"Both relays will be extremely competitive," said Craft. "The last event of the day, the mile relay, will be a real burner."

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One of the highlights of the meet will be the long jump between Eastern's Brandon and Illinois' Kaiser, according to Craft.

"In head-to-head competition earlier in the season, Becky won. However, Gayle's broken 20 feet now, six inches better than Kaiser's best this year. Gayle's jump last weekend would've given her a fourth place finish at nationals last year," said Craft.

Other top performances are expected in the 60 and 300-yard dashes as well as the distance runs.