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Hometown /

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHARLESTON, IL--Eastern Illinois University's Melanie Hatfield (Lawrenceburg, IN) made a difficult transition this season.

"Melanie made the transition from forward to guard at the Division I level, which is very, very hard to do," EIU head coach Bobbie Hilke said. "She really came of age the last few games of the season and has gained confidence in handling the ball."

As Hatfield, a 5-foot-6 sophomore, adjusted to the guard position, her scoring output increased accordingly. She tallied in double figures in nine of Eastern's last 10 games, raising her season average to 11.5 points.

She also tied the school record with 32 points against Southern Illinois and led the team in scoring on four occasions.

"Mel is the emotional leader on the floor, the heart and soul of the team," Hilke said. "When she has a good game, we really play well."

Hatfield turned in several notable performances as she helped her team to a 16-12 record and a fifth-place finish in the Gateway Collegiate Conference with a 10-8 mark.

She led the Lady Panthers with 65 steals, dished off 85 assists, pulled down 116 rebounds and earned a starting role in 26 of 28 contests.

With the other four EIU starters returning for the 1984-85 season, Hatfield and her teammates hope to challenge for the GCAC title and an automatic bid to the 1985 NCAA national tournament.