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March 24, 1981

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHARLESTON, IL--Four former suburban Chicago preps earned All-American honors to pace Eastern Illinois University's swimmers to sixth place in the NCAA II National Championship.

They are Dave Gibson (South Holland-Thornwood), Ted Soltys (Elmhurst-York), Tim Bird (Evanston-Elk Grove) and Mike Roessler (Lake Zurich-Arlington Heights).

The Panthers scored 126 points, just one short of a fifth place finish. It was EIU's best finish since the 1975 squad was third. The top 12 swimmers place and earn All-American honors.

Bird earned All-American honors in three events, the 100 butterfly and two relays, the 400 freestyle and 400 medley.

He was second in the 100 fly, EIU's highest individual finisher, in a school record 50.9 seconds. The medley relay was 5th and the free relay 10th.

"Tim had an exceptionally good time in the 100 fly . . . he broke his own record of last year. If the race would've gone another five yards, he would've won cause he was coming on so strong," said Coach Ray Padovan, who was chosen NCAA II National 'Coach of the Year'.

Roessler was All-American with fifth place in the 200 breaststroke in a school record 2:08.71 and seventh in the 100 breaststroke in 58.97, just a fraction of a second off the school mark.

"Mike did a great job in both events . . . obviously they were also lifetime bests. He was chosen our team captain last fall . . . the first time in several years that we've had a single captain. I think that indicates the respect he commanded from his teammates."

Gibson was fifth in the 100 fly and swam on two All-American relays, 400 and 800 freestyle. The 800 free set a school record of 6:59.25.

"Dave's 51.34 in the 100 fly would've been a school mark except Bird topped that a bit later. Both that time and his 200 fly time were lifetime bests so he had a great season when you add his relay performances."

Soltys was 12th in the 100 freestyle in 47.53, and swam on all three All-American relays, the 400 and 800 freestyle and 400 medley.

"Ted was a key person because he was able to swim all three relays . . . the only one we had who accomplished this particular feat plus he placed in the 100 freestyle . . . he had a busy three days at nationals," Padovan said.