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# ***Panther Sports News***

EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY, Charleston, IL 61920

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LS-AS-General

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHARLESTON, IL--An Eastern Illinois University athletic team is going to Taiwan.

No, it's not football or basketball. Would you believe team handball, and not the type familiar to most Americans.

Team handball is a combination of soccer and basketball and, although an Olympic sport, is so unique to the United States there is no officially sanctioned team.

But Eastern is making an initial step in that direction with a visit to Taiwan to compete in the Chung Jeng World Cup 1981 International Youth Handball Championship in Taipei City, April 25-30.

Also while in Taiwan the group will visit Fengshan, Charleston's sister city, and Kaoshiung University, which has an official faculty exchange program with EIU.

That's how this story began. Chen-Hsing Huang, world famous team handball coach currently on leave from Kaohsiung University, is serving as a visiting professor of physical education at EIU.

Huang is also the head coach of the Taiwan National Handball Team, which is one of the world's best. Most recently it won four European championships while touring that continent the past two summers.

With Huang's approval but spurred by the interest of Bill Buckellew, EIU's physical education coordinator of graduate studies, an effort was made to organize a team composed of Eastern students.

"Last fall Mr. Huang and I visited about the popularity of team handball throughout the world . . . with the exception of the United States. The only hotbeds we knew of were in New Jersey and the San Diego area.

"He thought an invitation to this tournament would be a possibility if we could organize a quality team. In February we made announcements around campus and had several interested in playing.

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"We told these young men who tried out that if they practiced hard until March 1 we would evaluate their progress and make a decision about seeking an invitation. Huang believed they had developed fairly well so, obviously through his connections, we received an invite," Buckelley explained.

"We are not officially THE United States team," Buckelley emphasized, "but we are the only team from the United States."

Basically team handball is played on an indoor court similar to basketball with seven per team broken down into a goalie and six field players who attempt to score by throwing a small-sized volleyball through the opponents' soccer style goal.

The ball may be held a maximum of three seconds at which time the player in control must pass, shoot or dribble. There are two 30 minute halves with no timeouts.

"It's a fast paced game . . . a lot of fast breaking like basketball except more contact. Next to soccer, team handball is the most popular game in Europe and Asia," Buckelley said.

The host tournament has agreed to pick up most of the travel expenses plus room and board. "Normally they pay for only one team which has to prove it's a strong entry . . . but it's so unique to have a U. S. team, there is considerable interest in securing our participation."

Eastern officials also have an eye cast towards competing in the 1984 Olympics which will be held in Los Angeles. "Obviously it's too early to set that as a definite goal but definitely not too early to begin participation.

"It might be possible to form an official U. S. entry, and if we do well in Taiwan and three or four students prove adept, Eastern could be well represented on such a team . . . it would be especially nice since the Olympics will be held in this country," Buckelley said.