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8-31-1984

08/31/1984 - Volleyball Panthers Open Season

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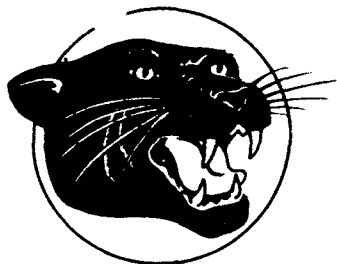
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Recommended Citation

University Marketing and Communications, "08/31/1984 - Volleyball Panthers Open Season" (1984). 1984. 562.

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Panther Sports News

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Aug. 31, 1984

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHARLESTON, IL--The 1984 version of the Eastern Illinois University volleyball team will open its home season at 7:30 p.m., Wednesday (Sept. 5) at Lantz Gym against intra-state rival Illinois.

The Lady Panthers, under the guidance of second-year head coach Betty Ralston, defeated the Fighting Illini twice last season. EIU won a difficult five-game match at Champaign (13-15, 10-15, 15-13, 15-8, 15-8) on Oct. 18 and then took a four-game set from Illinois (10-15, 15-8, 15-10, 15-9) at Charleston 15 days later.

"Both teams are real young," states Ralston. "We have more players who have collegiate experience but Illinois had a good recruiting class which should help immediately.

"Illinois should be out for revenge because we beat them twice last season. It should be an interesting match to watch--especially for the fans."

EIU returns only five players from its 26-11 squad that finished tied for third in the Gateway Collegiate Athletic Conference in 1983. Ralston's rookie Panther team took top honors in the Eastern Michigan Tournament, Eastern Kentucky Classic and the Wisconsin-Milwaukee Invitational while also reeling off eight straight wins at one stretch in the season.

Ralston aspires to duplicate last year's performance by combining a unique blend of youth and experience in 1984. The Lady Panthers are led by senior co-captains Gretchen Braker (Matteson/Rich Central) and Donna Uhler (Glen Ellyn/Benet). The hard-working Braker paced the 1983 team in assists with 772 along with compiling 173 digs. Uhler was second on the team in assists with 466. She also had 200 digs as a junior.

Two seniors, five juniors, one sophomore and six freshmen dot the Lady Panthers' roster. Some players to look for early in the season include junior college transfers

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Lori Berger (Henry/Illinois Central College), April Deer (East Peoria/Illinois Central College) and Venita Plese (Wilmington/Joliet JC), and freshmen Jenny Sinnick (Lisle) and Kaye Skerston (Springfield).