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## 11/14/1984 - Basketball Team Practices

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# Panther Sports News

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHARLESTON, IL--Practice makes perfect. The never-ending pursuit of excellence is exactly what the Eastern Illinois women's basketball team has been pursuing for two hours a day, six days a week since the opening of pre-season practice on Oct. 15.

The grueling scrimmages against each other and the monotonous drills will cease as the Lady Panthers prepare for their season-opener on Friday, Nov. 23 against Florida International at the Central Florida University Sunroast Invitational. West Georgia St. and host Central Florida are the two other participants in the holiday classic.

"I'm really excited about getting the season underway," sixth-year head coach Barbara Hilke states. "I've been very impressed by our team's shooting in practice. We are either great shooters or we aren't playing much defense. Only time will tell."

Decatur, Ill. sophomore guard Pat Hamilton has impressed the EIU coaching staff in pre-season drills. The Eisenhower High School graduate averaged 3.7 points per contest as a freshman while adjusting to the collegiate game.

"I would say Pat has been the most impressive player to date in practice," notes Hilke. "Pat is much more confident on the floor than she was last season. She is playing real aggressive defense and probably hasn't missed a layup in three weeks off full-court pressure."

Another player who has caught Hilke's watchful eye is Mattoon, Ill. native Kim Maxey. The sharp-shooting guard appears to have regained the "touch" and confidence that made her one of the premier players in the area three years ago.

"Kim has been shooting the light out of the basket from 18 to 22 feet out," reveals Hilke with a twinkle of joy in her eye. "She is hitting better than 60% from the field in practice. If Kim can come through for us, it will be a big plus."

The key to the season early-on will be getting balanced scoring from the starters and key substitutions, and the ability to control the boards. Two-time all-Gateway

Conference selection Toni Collins (Lincoln/Jamaica-Sidell) and Chris Aldridge (Taylorville) will man the forward spots. Collins--the third all-time leading scorer in EIU history with 1,331 points--averaged 13.7 points and 6.8 rebounds a year ago. Aldridge was second on the team in scoring (11.6) and first in rebounds (6.9).

Junior Melanie Hatfield (Lawrenceburg, Ind.) and senior Lori Conine (Paris/Kansas) will form a more-than formidable backcourt combination. Hatfield, an electrifying player with tremendous moves to the basket, is the floor-general. She averaged 11.5 points per game and scored a school-record 32 points against Southern Illinois. Conine is the defensive specialist of the squad and may well be the hardest working player on the court. She dished out 74 assists and chipped in eight points a game last year.

Slender Sue Hynd (Ottawa) figures to start at center. The 6-2, 156 pound junior shot a team-high .563 from the field last season. Freshman Kerry Walsh (Des Plaines/Marillac) will back her up.

"Kerry has been a real pleasant surprise in practice," Hilke admits. "She is a fast learner and works real hard. Kerry is a physical player and that is what we really need--especially in the Gateway."

Freshmen forwards Ann Brown (Evanston) and Michelle Newman (Mattoon) round out the team and should see action as the season develops.

"I think one of our strengths has to be our versatility," says Hilke. "We can put a pressing team on the court . . . a zone-busting team . . . or a fast-break team. I have never had a team that could do so much. It should be an exciting year."

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