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11/19/1984 - EIU Basketball Plays in Florida

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Panther Sports News

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CHARLESTON, IL--The Sunshine State offers many things. Orange juice . . . space shuttles propelling into the atmosphere . . . sunny beaches . . . the internationally renowned EPCOT Center . . . Mickey, Donald, Goofy and their band of thousands . . . and women's basketball.

Yes women's basketball.

The Eastern Illinois women's basketball team tips-off its season this Friday at the Central Florida Sun Roast Invitational in Orlando, Fla. The Lady Panthers square off against Florida International while West Georgia State takes on host Central Florida. The championship and consolation games are slated for Saturday evening.

"I feel confident we can make a good showing at the tournament," states sixth-year head coach Barbara Hilke in reference to the Thanksgiving holiday classic. "All the programs are similar because we all used to be successful in Division II before Central Florida and us went Division I.

"We need to clean up our defense in Florida and cut down on mistakes, but I'm excited about finally getting the season underway. I'm looking forward to a successful tournament and season."

The Lady Panthers--16-12 a year ago--are led by two-time all-conference selection Toni Collins. The Lincoln, Ill. native averaged 13.7 points per contest and 6.8 rebounds per game. She is the third all-time leading scorer in school history with 1,331 points and second all-time rebounder with 766.

Junior Chris Aldridge (Taylorville) and Sue Hynd (Ottawa) will fill the other spots along the front line. Aldridge averaged 11.6 points per contest while complementing Collins at the other forward slot. The slender 6-foot-2 Hynd shot a team-leading .563 while playing the pivot.

Senior Lori Conine (Paris/Kansas) and junior Melanie Hatfield (Lawrenceburg) should get the opening nods at the guard spots. Conine--noted for her defensive prowess--poured

EIU WOMEN'S BASKETBALL
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in eight points a game a year ago. Hatfield directs the attack on the court. She chipped in 11.5 points a game last year.

"The team that plays the best defense will win the tournament," notes Hilke. "I know we are capable of playing good defense. It is just a matter of proper execution."