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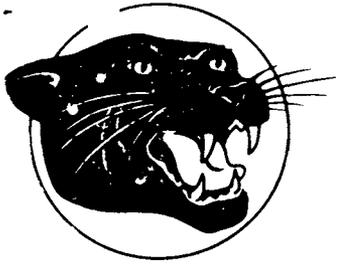
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# **Panther Sports News**

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Dec. 7, 1982  
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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHARLESTON, IL--Eastern Illinois University's football Panthers completed one of their greatest seasons in history.

EIU was 11-1-1, ranked 5th in the final NCAA I-AA poll, reached the quarterfinals of the I-AA tournament before being eliminated, and was co-champ of the Mid-Continent Conference.

The Panthers set or tied 12 individual or team school records, 17 Mid-Continent Conference records and two NCAA I-AA records. In addition it was the fifth straight winning season for EIU, another school mark.

For the third time in Head Coach Darrell Mudra's five-year reign the Panthers have competed in a post-season tournament. The 88% winning percentage is the best since the 1940 team went 6-1-1.

During the past five years Eastern's won-lost record is 47-15-1, an average of 9-3, which is better than any other record among Illinois state supported universities.

After winning a first round NCAA I-AA playoff game 16-13 over Jackson State, Eastern was eliminated by Tennessee State, 20-19, last Saturday in Nashville.

"We're disappointed by the loss to Tennessee State. A win would have given us a shot at No. 1 ranked Eastern Kentucky this week, and that would have been a great game," said Mudra.

"When a game like the one with Tennessee is so close, who gets the breaks usually determines the outcome and we didn't get many this time around.

"I thought we played well . . . we had our chances but just couldn't capitalize. Altogether we had a great year and I'm proud of our efforts. We beat some excellent I-AA teams and proved we could not only compete on the I-AA level, but could do it successfully. We only lose six starters so our chances to return are excellent," Mudra said.

Undefeated in the regular season (10-0-1), the Panthers knocked off Youngstown State and Akron, the second and third place teams in the Ohio Valley Conference, and Southern Illinois and Indiana State, the third and fourth place finishers in the Missouri Valley Conference.

Senior quarterback Jeff Christensen (Gibson City), the Mid-Continent Conference Offensive 'Player of the Year' who set a bundle of passing marks last season, had most of this fall's new records, also.

His most prominent 1982 marks were for single game passing yardage (409), career passing yardage (6282) and career touchdown passes (51).

With three veteran receivers, Pat Blair (Chicago-Vocational), Roger Holoman (Alton) and Jerry Wright (Chicago-Collins), returning, the replacement of Christensen is most critical to continued success.

Halfback Kevin Staple (Markham-Thornwood), who became only the sixth EIU runner to rush for over 1000 yards, had 1012 as a junior, and set a career record for receptions by a running back with 67.

EIU's defense, led by the league's defensive 'Player of the Year' end Keith Wojnowski (St. Anne-Kankakee Bishop McNamara), and Kodak All-American strong safety Robert Williams, ranked No. 2 in NCAA scoring defense allowing just 8.8 points a game.

This unit also set a school record 71 quarterback sacks, a NCAA I-AA single game record by allowing Kentucky State -12 yards total offense, and tied a national mark by sacking three Kentucky State QBs 12 times.

Linebacker Bill Mines (Washington, DC-Woodson) set season and career records for total tackles with 128 and 367, respectively.

Wojnowski, Mines and free safety Randy McCue (Aurora-East) are the only seniors on defense. Besides Christensen, the only senior starters on offense are all-conference players George Tuzil (Schaumburg) at center and Bob Norris (Pittsfield) at guard.