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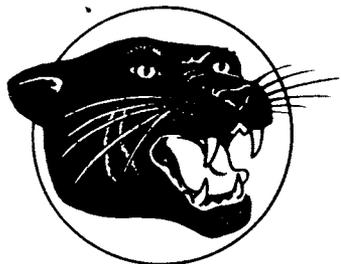
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Panther Sports News

Nov. 3, 1981

EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY, Charleston, IL 61920

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHARLESTON, IL--Eastern Illinois University's initial NCAA Division I basketball team will be on display in Robinson in an intrasquad game at 8 p.m. Tuesday (Nov. 10) at Lincoln Trail JC.

The Statesmen will also play an intrasquad game immediately preceding the Panthers at 6 p.m.

"This is an excellent opportunity for us to play in a game situation on a strange floor . . . a chance to measure our preseason progress," said Coach Rick Samuels.

Eastern, long a power in Division II with eight straight winning seasons, advanced to the major college ranks this season. EIU will open at Kent State, a Mid-American Conference team, on Saturday, Nov. 28, and then return home on Monday, Nov. 30 against Olivet Nazarene.

"Our returning players have been doing well," said Samuels. "We feel we're getting good effort but are a little ragged at times . . . we need to clean up what we're concentrating on."

Samuels returns four starters from last year's 16-11 team including NABC Third Team All-American Ricky Robinson (Aurora-East), who led the Panthers in virtually every offensive category with a 17.3 scoring average.

"Ricky has picked up where he left off . . . dominating the game and shooting particularly well."

Four year letterman Jim Williams (Monticello) has "shown the same consistency that we saw last year . . . he's a plus for us inside although only 6-5."

Guard Warren Patten (Memphis, TN-Westark, AR CC) is returning from a knee injury that sidelined him for the entire '80-81 season. "Warren is playing well offensively . . . he thought his collegiate career might be down the drain with the injury so he's excited to get this extra year of eligibility and play on a Division I team."

"Eddie Jones (Chicago-Lincoln JC) has really surprised . . . or maybe I should say continues to surprise since he really helped us last year down the stretch. He gets a lot out of his ability. If there is a clutch player, Eddie fills that role," Samuels says.

A top reserve last season, Leigh Hankins (South Beloit) is battling for a starting spot. "I contend that Leigh has the best natural basketball instincts on the team . . . he must improve his aggressiveness in order to play a lot."

Kankakee CC transfer Kevin Jones (Indianapolis, IN-Marshall), an HM All-American last season, will play at off guard. "Kevin's an explosive player . . . although just 6-3, he will surprise people with what he can do around the basket . . . his consistency will be a factor in playing time."

All four freshmen recruits are progressing significantly, according to Samuels. Doug Crook (Vincennes, IN-Lincoln), state tournament MVP for champ Lincoln, has "made great strides . . . he's really pushing some people out front."

Stephon Hopkins (Chicago-Kenwood), 6-7 frontliner, has "the physical tools to be an explosive player in the future . . . he's a little behind in fundamentals but has made progress."