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Panther Sports News

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LS-AS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHARLESTON, IL--Eastern Illinois University's soccer team is in the final four.

The Panthers advanced to the NCAA I Division National Tournament after San Diego State was forced to forfeit Sunday's quarterfinal round due to an ineligible player.

EIU, 18-1-2, will meet the University of Connecticut, 13-3-2, in a semifinal game Saturday afternoon (Dec. 5) at Palo Alto, CA.

Connecticut downed Long Island University to reach the final four for the second time. It's Connecticut's 11th time in the NCAA tourney while Eastern, which just advanced to Division I this season, is obviously in its first tournament appearance.

Alabama A & M, which finished third last season in its initial year in Division I, meets Philadelphia Textile in the other semifinal match. Alabama defeated EIU, 2-0, for the NCAA II championship in 1979.

The championship and third place games will be played at 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Sunday (Dec. 6).

"We're obviously elated to get this far . . . our goal at the beginning of the season was to get a post-season bid, and we have far surpassed that," said Coach Schellas Hyndman.

"Obviously anything can happen at this point . . . we're the new kid on the block but there are no defending champs in the field so it should be wide open."

Discounting the San Diego State forfeit EIU has recorded 17 shutouts outscoring opponents 56-4. It has 15 straight games without a loss. The only team to down the Panthers was the NAIA national champ Quincy College, 2-1.

All-American Damien Kelly leads EIU in scoring with 18 goals, just two shy of a school record. Midfielder Agyeman Prempeh has eight goals while Silvano Corazza has six with a team high eight assists.