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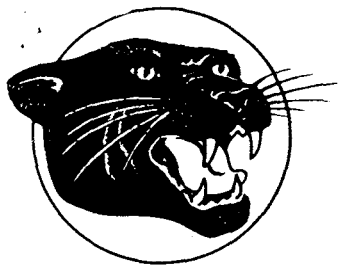
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Panther Sports News

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHARLESTON, IL (February 26, 1986)--When Eastern Illinois University's men's track and field team claimed the Association of Mid-Continent Universities Conference outdoor championship crown last spring, the Panthers stopped Northern Iowa's streak of three straight outdoor league titles.

EIU will attempt to snap UNI's string of two consecutive indoor conference crowns Saturday and Sunday (March 1-2) at the AMCU Indoor Championship at Cedar Falls, IA.

Eastern enters the six-team meet as an underdog to Northern Iowa, which has not lost an indoor title since the meet began in 1984. Other teams entered are Cleveland State, Illinois-Chicago, Southwest Missouri and Western Illinois.

"Northern Iowa is probably the favorite on paper, especially with them hosting the meet and having the last look at the scratch times," said Eastern assistant coach Tom Akers. "It's going to be a definite advantage for them. They're going to be real tough to beat. We're a solid No. 2."

Eastern won the outdoor title last May at O'Brien Stadium with 181 points to Western's 172 and Northern Iowa's 170. The Panthers would like to start a streak of their own.

"It's going to be just like last year's outdoor meet," Akers said. "It's going to be up to our key people again to duplicate or better their personal bests. If we can do that, we have a very solid chance of knocking off Northern Iowa."

Heading into the meet, Eastern had the top performances in four events and was second in five others. Sophomore Jim Maton (Shelbyville) leads the league in the 1,000-yard run at 2:10.50 and the mile at 4:12.83, senior Larry Thoennissen (Morton) is tops in the 35-pound weight throw at 59-2 3/4, and junior Dan Matas (Oak Park-River Forest) is No. 1 in the shot put at 55-7.

Maton, who won the indoor 880 a year ago in 1:54.29, ranks second in that race this season at 1:53.89. Thoennissen took top honors a year ago in the 35-pound weight at

57-0 3/4 and the shot put at 56-11 3/4 and rates second in the shot this season at 54-9 1/2. Sophomore Rod McMullen (Edwardsville) is the defending champion for the 60-yard hurdles after winning a year ago at 7.5. McMullen's time of 7.47 this season ranks second.

"The other coaches are worried about where Maton is running," Akers said. "I'm sure it's going to play a big part in Northern Iowa's lineup. I'd put money on it that they'll probably keep their quality people in events that Jim is not running because I think the race will probably be for second in his races."

Maton trails Jeff Burriss of Northern Iowa in the 880, but the two have not met this season. Burriss' season best of 1:53.1 was manually timed, while Maton's was clocked by a fully automatic timer.

Eastern senior Roxy Wood (Pekin) rates second in the pole vault at 15-0, and freshman teammate Todd Jungenberg (Hawthorn Woods-Carmel) ranks No. 2 in the triple jump at 45-3 3/4.

Northern Iowa won last year's indoor meet with 84 points, while the Panthers were second with 67. Western Illinois was third with 60, Southwest Missouri fourth with 30 and Illinois-Chicago fifth with 10.