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## 02/27/1985 - Track Heads To Conference Championship

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# **Panther Sports News**

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHARLESTON, IL--The Eastern Illinois women's track team will streak into the Gateway Conference Championships this Friday and Saturday (Mar. 1-2) at Illinois State University in Normal, Ill. Nine other teams will attempt to dethrone two-time defending champion Illinois State.

The Lady Panthers will miss the leadership of middle-distance specialist Janine Jarris (St. Charles). She holds the conference best in the 880 yard run (2:24.5) but won't compete because of a pinched nerve in her lower back. Jarris received league Player-of-the-Week honors twice this season for her performances.

"We definitely will miss Janine at the conference meet," admits acting head coach Dan Lowery. "She was running very well prior to the injury. However, the team must pick up the slack for her absence. I'm looking for an excellent performance by the entire team."

Eastern's best prospects for a top finish should come in the shot put. The Lady Panthers have three performers who are capable of getting hot and winning the event. School record-holder Valeta Strickland (Chicago/South Shore) has a heave of 47'11 3/4" to her credit. Senior Denise Macon (Chicago/Kenwood) and sophomore Deb Zubik (Calumet City/Thornwood) have eclipsed the EIU standard this season.

Sophomore Lauren Lynch (Elmhurst/York) figures to score some critical points in the long sprints. She has fared well in the 600 yard dash and the 500 meter run. Lynch was also a member of the 4 x 400 meter relay team that captured second place honors a year ago.

Senior captain Drenna Veasley (Freeport) and freshman Sabrina Harper (East Chicago Heights/Bloom Trail) are expected to be competitive in the sprints. They both have the potential to steal some points for Eastern.

Erin Healy (Chicago/St. Benedict) and Tracy Olawumi (Blue Island/Eisenhower) should also turn in impressive performances. Healy specializes in the 1,000 yard run while Olawumi is a long sprinter.