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03/05/1985 - Toni Collins Good GPA

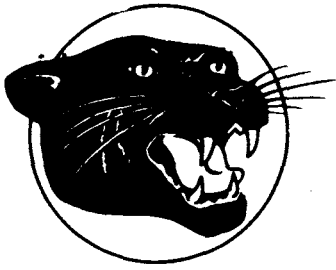
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Panther Sports News

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHARLESTON, IL--(March 5, 1985) The Eastern Illinois administrators and coaches live by the term. It is their credo.

Lady Panther basketball player Toni Collins is living proof of the term to the nth degree.

Collins--a Lincoln, Ill. resident--has demonstrated an immense amount of proficiency on the hardwood and in the classroom during her four years at EIU. The physical education major earned a perfect 4.0 GPA last semester and was just recently named to the College Sports Information Directors of America (COSIDA) Academic All-District 5 team. Collins has been nominated for the COSIDA Academic All-American team.

The Jamaica-Sidell High School graduate plays with the same amount of intensity as she tackles the books with. Collins holds 11 school records--including career-rebounding and single-game scoring marks. She will leave EIU as the second all-time leading scorer--male or female--behind All-American Nancy Kassebaum. Collins will accumulate more than 1,700 points while Kassebaum's mark is 1,865.

"Toni has great skills for a person her size," sixth-year coach Barbara Hilke states. "At times she is so much a team player that she passes up the good shots and passes off to a teammate. Toni has an innate sense of the game of basketball and the court."

The 6-foot-0, 159-pounder set a lofty standard that other EIU freshmen may never be able to live up to. She averaged an impressive 17.1 ppg as a collegiate rookie.

"I'll never forget the first game she showed me what she could really do," Hilke recalls as if it were yesterday. "I asked Toni to go out and get three offensive fouls... not charges but offensive fouls. I wanted to get her to go to the basket. She got 25 points but only two fouls. She thought I was crazy."

The two-time all-league selection leads the team in scoring this season with a 15.1 average. Collins also is pacing the squad in rebounding with a 7.5 average. She leads the Lady Panthers in free throw percentage with a .533 mark.

Collins' accomplishments at Eastern have many people in awe. Many students and athletes couldn't hold a candle to what she has accomplished. Her legacy will live on in Lady Panther annals for years to come.

ALDRIDGE, COLLINS CITED BY GATEWAY

Charleston, Ill. (March 5, 1985)--Eastern Illinois women's basketball player Chris Aldridge (Taylorville) was named to the Gateway Collegiate Athletic Conference's first-team all-star squad.

She is second on the team in scoring with a 14.7 average. The junior forward also is second on the team in rebounding with a 7.0 mark. Aldridge leads the club in field goal shooting (.526) and in minutes played (896).

"Chris has been our most consistent player this season," states sixth-year head coach Barbara Hilke. "She plays good defense and battles for every rebound. I'm really excited for her."

Aldridge was named to the Sun Roast Invitational and Heath Candy Classic all-tournament teams this season. Her season-highs include a 20-point performance in the opening game of the year against Florida International and three 13-rebound performances. She has eclipsed the 15-point barrier 12 times while also accumulating at least 7 rebounds on 15 occasions.

The physical education major also received a perfect 4.0 GPA last semester and was nominated for the All-Academic District 5 squad. She was the "hard-cover" version of EIU's book end forwards that were into the books. Lady Panther teammate--senior forward Toni Collins (Lincoln/Jamaica-Sidell)--received honorable mention all-conference laurels this season.

Collins leads Eastern in scoring (15.2) and rebounding (8.0) through 26 games. She owns 11 school records and was named to the all-league elite team as a sophomore and junior. The school's all-time leading rebounder received All-Academic District 5 accolades and has been nominated for Academic All-American. She earned a 4.0 GPA in physical education last semester.

Other members of the all-league first team include: Player-of-the Year Wanda Ford (Drake), Rookie-of-the-Year Julie Fitzpatrick (Drake), Petra Jackson (SIU), Allison Daniel (Wichita State), Diane Roberts (Northern Iowa), Marla Maupin (Illinois State), Cathy Beesley (Illinois State), Amy Hile (Indiana State) and Jeanette Tendai (Southwest Missouri). Illinois State's Jill Hutchison and Melinda Fischer were named Coaches of the Year.