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04/02/1986 - Tennis Off To Bad Start

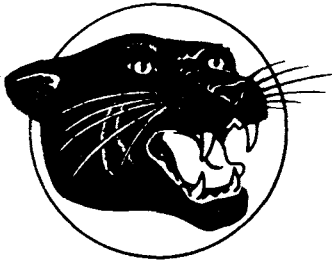
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Panther Sports News

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHARLESTON, IL (April 2, 1986) -- The South is supposed to be warm, right? It didn't start off that way for the Eastern Illinois women's tennis team (5-6) as they ventured south March 22-28 on their spring break schedule. With the thermometer just reaching the 36 degree mark, the tired and cold Lady Panthers were able to beat Murray State (Murray, KY) 5-4, but lost to Western Kentucky 2-7.

Things warmed up in Florida with Eastern taking wins from Weber College (Babson Park, FL) 9-0, University of Evansville (Orange Lake, FL) 8-1, and Oberlin College (Orange Lake) 9-0. One match was dropped to LeHigh University (St. Petersburg, FL) 0-9, and another to Trenton (Orange Lake) 3-6. Overall, Eastern was 4-3 on the trip.

"The trip accomplished a lot of things for us," states head coach Gail Richard. "We had previously lost to both Murray State and the University of Evansville two years ago . . . I think our wins this year document the fact that we are building up our program . . . Our doubles are starting to come along. If we can maintain our intensity we'll be ready for conference play."

Conference play is not far off at all as the Lady Panthers will travel to Illinois State on April 8. Their last non-conference game was played on April 1 at Principia.

Richard had hoped to use the Principia match up as a "final tune-up" before conference play, and it turns out that her idea worked out well as Eastern took the match 5-4.

"We picked up some singles which is what we wanted to do," explains Richard. "Principia is a real tough team, but we were able to pull out some good wins . . . Coartney Allen (Principia) has won nationals the past three years. Although Lauri (Lehman) has lost to her, she played strong."