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04/17/1986 - Lady Panther Softball Team

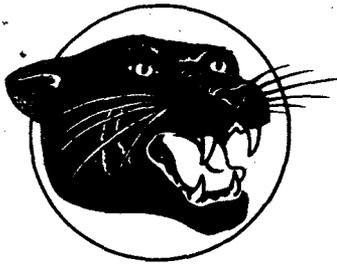
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Panther Sports News

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHARLESTON, IL -- (April 17, 1986) -- After playing the first-half of their schedule on the road, Eastern Illinois University's Lady Panther softball team opens Gateway Conference play at home this Friday and Saturday (April 18-19), much to the delight of two sophomores.

Angel Lendvay (Mundelein, IL), an accounting major and Sara Karcher (Wayne City, IL) an English major, are anxious to display their skills before friends in the friendly confines of Lantz Field.

After a less-than-satisfying 1985 season, Lendvay, an all-conference selection last season at right-field feels the current team has something to prove.

"We're very excited about our chances of winning the Gateway Conference," the blond sophomore emphasized.

"This year we're ranked 7th in the Mideast region and this is causing quite a few teams in the conference to sit up and take notice of us. It's different being ranked because you know you have to be on your toes and ready to play each and every game."

Lendvay not only lends team morale with her positive thinking, but was batting a healthy .270 when the Lady Panthers traveled to DePaul on Wednesday for a non-conference doubleheader.

Lendvay has accounted for three triples, a home run and seven RBI, in addition to a .960 fielding percentage.

When Karcher isn't on the mound as the Lady Panthers' backup pitcher, the talented sophomore is playing shortstop. And like her teammate, Karcher is optimistic about the 1986 team.

"We're still a young team, but already we have come so far and learned so much. Sure, there were a couple of games we shouldn't have lost, but because of a fluke play here or there, we wound up losing," she pointed out.

Last weekend, the EIU softball team opened a few eyes with its second-place finish in the Penn State Invitational.

Eastern completed Friday play undefeated, but lost to Central Michigan twice on Saturday in the double championship round. The Panthers had Central Michigan beat when the Chippewas scored two runs in the seventh inning with two out.

"That's a perfect example of what I mean," declared Karcher. "It was a fluke play that beat us, or else we would have won the championship."

Karcher is swinging away at a .250 clip which includes two doubles, one triple and six RBI.

Eastern is currently 15-8-1 (not counting Wednesday's games) and Panther coach Janet Marquis speaks highly of her two sophomore players.

"In Angel and Sara, you're talking about two of our most consistent players. Both of these girls give 100% in practice and this shows on the field," the first-year coach emphasized.

"We're finally getting the recognition we deserve," Lendvay pointed out. "I really don't think many people know how tough and balanced the Gateway actually is. And now that we're ranked, other teams will be gunning for us."

Karcher echoed her teammate's sentiments. "Other teams are really up for us this year. Rankings go a long way, mostly on what you have had or have been in years past. But this season, it's what you are. And teams are finding that out," she concluded.