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04/29/1986 - Snyder Ties Record

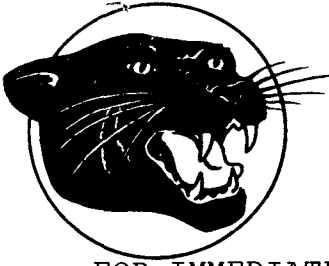
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Panther Sports News

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CHARLESTON, IL (April 29, 1986)--Eastern Illinois University's KENDALL SNYDER tied an NCAA record Sunday (April 27) when he smashed two home runs in one inning of a 15-2 Association of Mid-Continent Universities Conference romp over Northern Iowa at Cedar Falls, Iowa.

Snyder, a senior first baseman from Raymond Lincolnwood (Illinois) High School and Lincoln Land Community College, led off the second inning with a solo homer. In his second at-bat of the inning, Snyder blasted a three-run shot to conclude an eight-run outburst. With two right-handed swings of his bat, Snyder tied an NCAA record established by South Florida's Todd Wagonner on April 14, 1985 against Alabama-Birmingham.

Snyder began his assault on the record book on Saturday (April 26) with three consecutive homers in three straight at-bats. He drilled a two-run blast in the first game of a double-header before smacking a grand slam and a solo homer in the nightcap. Snyder's impressive totals for the three-game series and his debut at Northern Iowa were five home runs, 11 runs batted in, seven runs scored and six hits in 10 at-bats.

"I'm mostly a streak hitter," said Snyder, who took over the team lead in homers with nine while moving to second with 36 runs batted in for 45 games. "I go on these streaks once in a while, but never this big. I was telling a couple of guys on the bench that I might get up again and hit No. 5. I know one thing: I sure like to play there."

Snyder credited his power surge to a change in his batting style. "I just did it on my own," the 6-foot-3, 200-pound Snyder said. "Instead of bending my knees, I just stood up. I was watching the ball come in better, and I wasn't chasing any bad pitches. The last homer I hit was the farthest. The Northern Iowa left fielder said it must have went 500 feet."

"I'm going to try to keep the same stance because I feel real comfortable with it. Once you find a groove, you want to stay in a groove. I'd like to finish the season with double figures in home runs and a .300 batting average."

Eastern Illinois head coach Tom McDevitt said Snyder reminded him of former All-American third baseman Tim Pyznarski, who ripped opposing pitchers for 22 homers, 78 RBIs and a .443 average in 1981 while wearing the Panther uniform. Pyznarski was selected that spring as a first-round draft choice by the Oakland A's.

"I was extremely pleased because I always saw that potential in Kendall," said McDevitt, "and now it's starting to show. For a while there, I thought I was watching Pyznarski all over again. The five home runs Kendall hit would have gone out any day, any where in our ballpark (380 in center). None of them were cheap ones. I don't ever recall that happening at Eastern. I know it hasn't in my nine years here."

But two homers in one inning was nothing new to Snyder. He accomplished the incredible feat last summer while playing for the Springfield Rifles of the Central Illinois Collegiate League. Snyder led off an inning at Quincy, Illinois with a solo homer and followed with a grand slam in his second at-bat of the frame. "This is the second time in my life I've hit two homers in one inning," the 21-year-old Snyder said of his NCAA record-tying performance.

While Snyder's hitting was hindered earlier this season because of a thumb injury suffered in March, his glove continued to be among the best in the nation. A right-handed first baseman, he has fielded 397 of 399 chances flawlessly for a remarkable fielding percentage of .995.

"When a guy has a hard time holding the bat, then you know it's painful for him to swing it," McDevitt said. "But Kendall is not a complainer. He's just a good ol' farm boy who goes out and does the job every day. He never has an excuse, never an excuse. He's an excellent big-time glove man at first, and that potential has always been there."

Snyder came to Eastern Illinois as a home-run hitter in baseball and a scoring forward in basketball at Lincoln Land, a two-year institution based in Springfield, Illinois. He established a freshman record at Lincoln Land as he blasted eight homers in the spring of 1983. A physical education major, Snyder is scheduled to graduate from Eastern Illinois with a Bachelor of Science degree next fall.