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## 04/10/1985 - Three Illinois Prep sign Letter Of Intent

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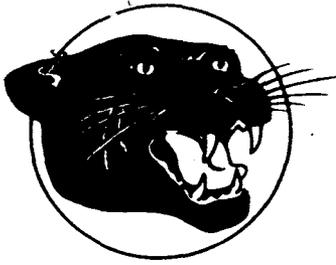
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# Panther Sports News

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LS-Hts

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHARLESTON, IL--Three of Illinois' most honored preps have signed basketball scholarships to attend Eastern Illinois University, head coach Rick Samuels announced Wednesday.

The three are Jay Taylor, 6-2 guard from East Aurora, Don Peavey, 6-5 forward from West Frankfort and 6-8 center Mike West of Warrensburg-Latham.

This trio, plus the two who signed in the fall, 6-5 Dave Vance of Lake Park HS in Roselle and 6-9 Brian Murphy of Oswego, gives the Panthers "another outstanding recruiting season," says Samuels.

Taylor led East Aurora, coached by Al Davis, to a 26-3 record. The Wildcats lost in the Class AA supersectional by two points to Rockford Boylan.

Taylor was the Upstate Eight Conference 'Player of the Year' leading the league with a 24.5 scoring average, 23.1 overall. He shot 56% from the field, averaged 7.2 rebounds and five times was over 30 points.

His honors include being chosen to compete for the North team in the summer Illinois Basketball Coaches Association Large School All-Star game, was picked as a Campaign News-Gazette and Chicago Sun-Times Special Mention All-Stater and to the S-T 20-man All-Area team, fourth Team All-State by the IBCA, Fox Valley Area 'Player of the Year', and Honorable Mention All-State by both Associated Press and United Press International. The Sun-Times also picked him 25th on its list of the state's top 30 seniors.

"Jay is a young man who really blossomed as a senior and received a ton of honors," said Samuels. "He was the leading scorer in one of the best basketball leagues in the state and led East Aurora to the super-sectional for the first time in several years.

"He's a particularly effective offensive player . . . has great instincts, can shoot standing or on the move, can blow by people once he receives the ball and in the East Aurora system was accustomed to playing aggressive defense.

"Maybe the most impressive stat is that he averaged over seven rebounds playing at the off guard spot, a position he also is best suited for here. In fact, we think his abilities will allow him to compete for playing time as a freshman," Samuels said.

Taylor's high school coach, Al Davis, echoed Samuels sentiments. "Jay really developed between his junior and senior year . . . he went from 5-11 to 6-2 and filled out nicely.

"He improved his passing, and really was a penetrator as a senior . . . yet could also hit the 20 footer. I think, though, the thing that really separated him from other guards was his ability to get the offensive rebound . . . he has great leaping ability. In the last three years I definitely believe he was the best rebounding guard in the league. And we were a small team so he was often going up against considerably bigger people.

"For instance, Elgin has a 6-11 center and a 6-8 forward, and Jay had his career highs of 32 points, 14 rebounds and eight assists . . . a tremendous effort," Davis said.

"I think he'll continue to improve in college as evidenced by how far he's come the last two years. He has especially good quickness and that'll really be an asset at Eastern.

"He played almost every minute for us and proved he could take the punishment and, as I said, he did this against a lot bigger teams so I think he can handle the physical play he'll see in college."

Peavey led West Frankfort to a 17-9 record, its best won-lost mark since 1971. He will play for the South team in the IBCA Class A summer all-star game, was chosen Class A Honorable Mention All-State by UPI and Honorary Captain of the All-Southern Illinois team selected by the Evansville Sunday Courier and Press.

Three other news media organizations picked him to their All-South team plus he was a two time pick to the Carbondale Holiday All-Tournament team and will also compete in the Southern Illinois-Southeast Missouri all-star game at Cape Girardeau this summer.

This winter Peavey averaged 21.8 points, 8.2 rebounds, shot 49.2% from the field and 77.9% from the line.

"Don is an outstanding athlete who really took charge and was a leader for his team," said Samuels.

"He'll play small forward and kind of remind people of (Tim) Dykstra in that he plays exceptionally hard and can change the course of the game with his perimeter shooting.

"He's also demonstrated that he's a good passer but it's that competitive attitude and determination that's really going to be an asset."

His high school coach, Tim Ricci, says Eastern "offers Don a good opportunity. I agree with Coach Samuels that he's an excellent passer and shooter. He has that ability to look one way and pass another, and he did most of his shooting from the outside . . . he shot real well for us."

West is the third recruit who will play in one of the summer IBCA all-star games competing for the South squad in the Class A contest. He also was picked to the Sun-Times Special Mention All-State team, Associated Press Honorable Mention All-State and three time Decatur Herald All-Area choice.

He averaged 21.5 points as a senior, 10 rebounds, four blocks and three assists. In a three year career he was the school's rebounding record holder averaging eight per game, and second on the all-time scoring list with 1471 points, 19.9 p/game.

Warrensburg-Latham, coached by 1972 EIU graduate Phil Shelton, was 22-5 this season losing to Class A second place finisher Chrisman in the sectional tournament.

"I'd say Mike will be an even more effective player in college because he'll be able to better utilize some of his stronger skills once he adjusts to facing the basket. He's a great passer, good ball handler and has the potential to grow, not only in height but probably put on another 20 pounds or so," Shelton said.

"He can move very well without the ball which is something a lot of post players don't have to do in high school. Several college coaches told me he could be a real sleeper . . . that he has the potential to be a very successful college player," said Shelton.

"He had a back problem which forced him to have two herniated discs dissolved. Not that he should have had the injury, but it may have helped him progress because

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he really appreciates being able to play after being told he may never play again. He must stretch about 30-40 minutes before each practice, and was dedicated enough to do that . . . that's saying something for someone in high school."

Samuels also foresees West growing "because he's only 17 years old . . . we think he'll sneak up another inch or so. He's a legitimate college forward who can shoot from the 12-15 foot range.