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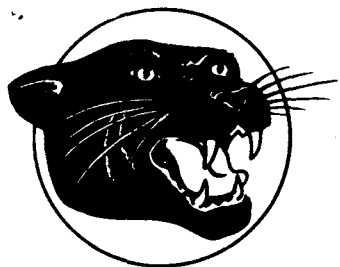
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Panther Sports News

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHARLESTON, ILL (May 14, 1986)--The Eastern Illinois women's track team will compete in the Gateway Conference Championships May 16-18 in Wichita, KS.

The Lady Panthers will try to improve upon last year's sixth-place league finish. Illinois State, Western Illinois and Southern Illinois figure to battle it out for the team title.

Junior Valeta Strickland (Chicago/ South Shore) should be considered one of the favorites in the shot put. She broke the school indoor-record at the league meet at Eastern earlier this year while capturing first-place honors. She is ranked second in the conference this spring with a toss of 48-9 1/2.

Another top performer in the weight events is Deb Zubik (Calumet City/Thornwood). The versatile junior has a throw of 44-11 1/2 in the shot put while also being an accomplished discus thrower. Zubik is expected to compete for points in both events.

Freshman Kristi Baum (Belleville/O'Fallon) is another potential point producer in the weight events for Eastern Illinois. She is ranked sixth in the discus with a toss of 138-11 while also being ranked seventh in the javelin with a 137-6 effort.

The Lady Panthers most versatile performer may be junior middle-distance specialist Janine Jarris (St. Charles). She is ranked in the league's Top 5 in three separate events. The dedicated runner is second in the 800 meter run (2:10.84), third in the 1500 meter run (4:32.74) and fourth in the 3000 meter run (10:01.91).

Sprinter Lori Plutz (Harvey/Thornton) is ranked seventh in the 400 meter dash (57.13) and 10th in the 200 meter dash (25.21). The speedy freshman will try to duplicate her 2nd place finish in the 440 yard run at the Gateway's Indoor Championships in late February.

Freshman Tina Dawson (Mulkeytown/Sesser-Valier) should be a contender in the long jump. Her 18-5 1/2 effort in the long jump is one of the best in the league this year.

Lauren Lynch (Elmhurst/York) figures to be a factor in the middle distance races. She was clocked in a 4:40.5 in the 1500 meter run at the Illinois Intercollegiates on May 2-3. Her 2:11.59 effort in the 800 meter is the fourth fastest in the Gateway.

Tracy Olawumi (Blue Island/Eisenhower) should pick up some crucial points in the 400 meter dash and as a member of Eastern 3rd-ranked 4 x 400 meter relay team. Olawumi's 56.74 time in the open 400 meter is one of the finest showings in the league this spring.