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10/14/1985 - Basketball Opens Practice

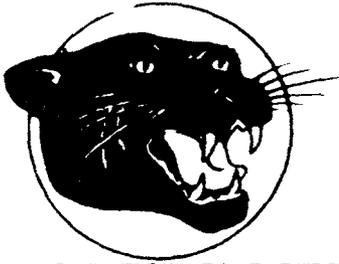
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Panther Sports News

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHARLESTON, IL--Led by 6-4 senior All-American Jon Collins (East St. Louis-Cahokia), Eastern Illinois University's basketball Panthers opened practice Tuesday (Oct. 15) for the 1985-86 season.

Besides Collins, who is EIU's first Division I All-American, the Panthers have two other returning senior starters, 7-0 Kevin Duckworth (Dolton-Thornridge) and 6-1 Doug Crook (Vincennes, IN-Lincoln), back from last year's 20-10 Mid-Continent tournament champs.

Collins, an Associated Press and Sporting News HM A-A, is bidding to become the all-time EIU scorer. He has 1071 in two seasons, and needs 585 points to break John Milholland's (1956-58) 1655 mark.

The past two years he has finished second in the Mid-Continent in scoring with 513 and 558 points so with an expanded schedule due to Hawaiian tournament, the record is within his reach.

"Winning the conference tournament and getting 20 wins did a lot for our program," said Samuels. "We are going to field a solid team again providing some of our younger players develop as we expect.

"With Collins we believe we have one of the league's premier players, and someone we can rely upon each night out although due to his reputation, he can expect to be a marked man by opponents."

Duckworth, who will be a four year starter, was sidelined the last two weeks of '85 with a broken hand. Nonetheless, he led the league with 44 blocked shots (1.5 p/game), was fourth in rebounding at 7.3 and prior to the injury had a streak of six straight games with over ten rpg. He also has been a consistent double figure scorer since his frosh season averaging 11 points in his career.

"Duckworth has made considerable progress each year therefore we expect him to have an outstanding senior season . . . the type that draws attention from more than just the people within the conference."

Crook, who can play either point or off guard, is also a consistent double figure scorer. He was second on the team in assists (91) while scoring 11.7 ppg.

Expected to step in at point guard is 6-0 sophomore Norm Evans who exhibited considerable playmaking and ball hawking skills as a frosh reserve. Sophomores Vince Macciocchi (Hinsdale-Central) and Jerry Strickland (Mounds-Meridian), each of whom played sparingly last year, will likely get the first shot at replacing graduated second team all-league forward Dirk Androff.

Five recruits who could play some as freshmen are 6-2 Jay Taylor (Aurora) of East Aurora, 6-5 Dave Vance (Roselle) of Lake Park, 6-8 Mike West (Warrensburg) of Warrensburg-Latham, 6-9 Brian Murphy (Oswego) of Oswego HS and 6-5 Don Peavey (West Frankfort) of West Frankfort HS.

Taylor, one of the state's best guards, was the 'player of the year' in the Upstate Eight conference while Vance, a product of the same league, was the No. 2 vote getter for the same honor.