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Men's Hoops Back In Action On Saturday At Northern Illinois

Flames and Huskies tip at 7:00 p.m., at NIU's new Convocation Center.

Dec. 26, 2002

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UIC (6-3) vs. Northern Illinois (4-5)

Saturday, December 28, 2002 * 7:00 p.m. CST

Convocation Center (9,100)

TV/Radio: None

SETTING THE SCENE: UIC will look to bounce back from a loss at Indiana State on Dec. 23, when they travel to meet Northern Illinois on Saturday in the Huskies' new Convocation Center. NIU (4-5), meanwhile, enters on a positive note, having won most recently 72-65 at Illinois State on Dec. 21. The Flames are vying to go 5-0 versus Illinois universities during their non-conference schedule, having already downed Eastern Illinois, Illinois State, Southern Illinois and Northwestern. UIC, which is the top shooting and rebounding team in the Horizon League, has not lost back-to-back games this season.

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Junior Armond Williams is UIC's leading rebounder this season.

THE SERIES: UIC leads the closely contested series, 17-13. The two teams, who were both former ly members of the Mid-Continent and Midwestern Collegiate Conference, have played every season since 1987. The Flames have had the upper hand in the series under current head coach [Jimmy Collins](#), having won six of the eight meetings. The Flames are 1-2, though, at NIU under Collins.

SCOUTING NORTHERN ILLINOIS: Northern Illinois enters Saturday's contest with a 4-5 record while having gone 2-2 in its new Convocation Center. On the floor, NIU is led by junior guard P.J. Smith and junior forward Marcus Smallwood. Smith enters averaging 12.6 points and 3.7 rebounds per game while Smallwood, who is the reigning MAC West Player of the Week, tallies 10.9 points and 9.2 boards per outing.

LAST TIME WE MET: UIC 86, Northern Illinois 69; Dec. 15, 2001 (UIC Pavilion) UIC shot a blistering 59% in the second half to help turn a two-point halftime deficit into a 17-point victory at the UIC Pavilion. Senior [Jordan Kardos](#) paced the Flames with 18 points, netting all four of his three-point attempts on the day. [Thor Solverson](#) (14 pts.), J.P. Mitchom (14 pts.) and [Aaron Carr](#) (11 pts.) also reached double figures for UIC, which forced the Huskies into 25 turnovers in the game. Leon Rogers led NIU with 17 points.

STATE CHAMPIONS: UIC, which would move to 5-0 this season versus teams from the state of Illinois with a victory over Northern Illinois on Saturday, has had great success against Illinois universities and colleges in the last three years, going 13-3 since the start of the 2000-01 campaign.

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