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Panther Sports News

EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY - Charleston, IL 61920
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WIDE RECEIVERS (Last in a Series)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (AUGUST 24)

CHARLESTON, IL.--Eastern Illinois University's pass receivers are untested. To put it more succinctly, none of the six on the depth chart has ever caught a collegiate pass.

The Panthers relied almost solely on ROY BANKS, CALVIN PIERCE and WILLIE CAIN the past several years. Following their graduation, the Panthers are now devoid of experienced personnel.

Eastern has become renowned for its passing attack during the past decade. New head coach BOB SPOO and offensive coordinator KIT CARTWRIGHT are in agreement, though, that balance is better.

"You'll see more of a blend of run and pass," says CARTWRIGHT, "with the idea that we can run the ball when we want to. . . to be able to execute the run when we want to get a first down to kill the clock. I've seen lots of games lost where one more first down would have made the difference between winning and losing."

Consequently the offensive game plan will take some pressure off a whole new set of receivers who can now benefit mostly by playing time.

JOHN METZGER (CHATHAM-GLENWOOD) and RALPH STEWART (EAST CHICAGO HEIGHTS-BLOOM TRAIL), both redshirt freshmen, will start at flanker and split end, respectively.

METZGER is a walk-on who was a scout team running back last year. STEWART was academically ineligible his first year on campus.

"John does all the things above and beyond the call of duty. What you spit out in words, he kicks out in action," says CARTWRIGHT. "He's got great work habits . . .the type of player who knows his deficiencies and works hard to improve them."

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Although Metzger doesn't have great speed, he's "better at route technique this fall and he can catch the ball . . .and do it in a crowd."

STEWART was not allowed to work with the team last year due to NCAA regulations so couldn't benefit by spring practice. "He's been a pleasant surprise," says CARTWRIGHT.

"He has excellent hands, is a good learner and has the courage to play wideout. . . but he's untested, just like everyone else."

MIKE MACEK (OAK LAWN-COMMUNITY), a converted quarterback who has bulked up to 6-4, 210, will start at tight end. "In our system, the tight end is a blocker first, and possession receiver next. Mike will adequately fill that role and be a good player," says CARTWRIGHT.

Backup wideouts are freshman MARK SHEEDY (BUFFALO GROVE) and JC transfer ALFREDO KAMIDOI (WEST VALLEY CITY, UT-EASTERN UTAH CC) at flanker and split end.

SHEEDY was all-conference at suburban Buffalo Grove which won the '87 IHSA Class 6A state championship and reached the semifinals in '86. "Mark is a good route runner and a solid backup . . .he's definitely a wide receiver of the future here.

"Alfredo is talented but it's a matter of how quick we can teach him the offense. He's a JCer but without the benefit of spring practice, he's like an incoming freshman only a couple years older."

PAT MUNDA (CALUMET CITY-THORNTON FRACTIONAL NORTH) is the backup tight end. A sophomore, MUNDA has already had his redshirt season so has been in the program two years. He is 6-3, 240, the best size for that for that position of anyone on the club.