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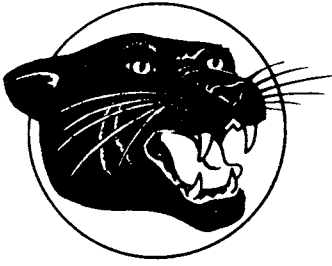
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Panther Sports News

Aug. 16, 1982
LS-AS-FB STATE

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LINEBACKERS

(Third in a Series)

CHARLESTON, IL--Alonzo Lee, Eastern Illinois University assistant coach, wants to mold a corps of linebackers in his own image.

That will take some doing since Lee was one of Eastern's best middle linebackers starting on three teams that went 30-9 from 1978-80.

Now his role has switched as he enters his first year as a full-time staff assistant, and obviously assigned to an area he's most familiar.

"We want to develop the toughest group of linebackers to ever play here. We're quicker than last year and faster with 4.5 and 4.6 speed on the outside.

"We'll do some things with multiple fronts to free us up to blitz . . . we've been a blitzing team the past couple years and we're going to stay that way . . . plus we can really come with our outside people," he said.

Lee inherits some talent but he's also got to replace four year starters Ira Jefferson and Tom Murray who combined for over 600 tackles during their four years.

The lone returning starter is three year letterman Bill Mines (Washington, DC-Woodson) in the middle. Twice he has earned second team all-conference honors and is the leading returning tackler with 81.

"Bill is aware of what everyone is doing on the field and can make adjustments," says Lee. "He had to develop that ability to become a great player . . . plus his hitting is crisper and stronger, also."

Reggie Taylor (Apopka, FL-Arizona Western CC) seems to be a sure starter on the right side. An HM All-American at Arizona Western CC last year, he transferred for spring semester and quickly inherited a starting spot.

"Reggie's going to be a great one," Lee predicts. "He adapted to our program quickly moving into a starting spot after only three days of practice."

Competing for the other outside spot are Ortega Jackson (Washington, DC-Cardoza) and David Fergurson (Alton), with Jackson holding a slight edge entering fall camp.

"Jackson's speed and quickness are his greatest assets but he needs to become stronger," says Lee. Originally a lineman, he made the switch to linebacker last year playing briefly in half the games.

Fergurson, who lettered as a freshman, is "one of the most intense players on the team . . . he's always in excellent condition and will really stick you but needs to work on the weights," Lee added.

Last year he had 39 tackles, a quarterback sack, two tackles for loss and a fumble recovery.

"This past spring it would be Jackson for a week and then Fergurson would move ahead of him . . . both will definitely play considerably."

Tyrone Covington (Chicago-Morgan Park), another who lettered as a frosh, is pushing Mines in the middle. "Tyrone hurt his shoulder the last week of spring practice but he should be ready to really push Bill this fall . . . he benched 350 as a freshman and will be a great one before he leaves."