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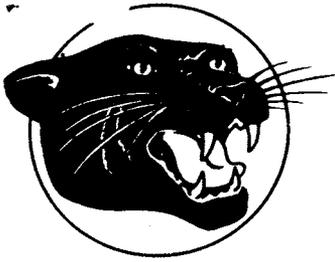
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Panther Sports News

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Aug. 10, 1984
LS-AS-Hometowns

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RECEIVERS (THIRD IN A SERIES)

CHARLESTON, IL--Jerry Wright (Chicago-Collins) is the best pass catcher in Eastern Illinois University football history.

A bold statement, indeed, especially considering he's still trailing the likes of Willie White, James Warring, Scott McGhee and Rob Mehalic in most Panther receiving records.

Still, barring injury, that usual disclaimer, Wright, a 5-11, 170 senior, should end up in the top three of career stats for passes caught, yardage and touchdown passes.

The possibility exists, though, that if Wright is double teamed again by opposing secondaries that he could fall shy in any one or all of the three major record lists. Regardless, as they say, if he still isn't the best, it won't take long to call the roll.

First, the facts. An Associated Press HM All-American, Wright has caught 74 passes for 1493 yards and needs just 705 to surpass Willie White's all-time record 2197. That's likely to fall as Wright has topped 700 in each of the previous two seasons.

Five times he has gained more than 100 yards receiving in a game and set the Mid-Continent record averaging 24.4 yards per catch in 1982. That year he also caught an additional 20 passes for 266 yards in two mud-soaked playoff games.

EIU head coach Al Molde says Wright is "certainly the big play guy. I don't know about saying he's the best but definitely the most talented receiver . . . I know most of the opponents felt they had to stop him or they'd have problems for sure."

While Wright is not challenged at split end, at the other end of the spectrum is the flanker position where veteran Jim Schmidt (DeKalb) and sophomore Roy Banks (Detroit-King) are "dead even", according to Molde.

"Roy had a great spring and we know he has great ability but needs experience while Schmidt has an edge in that he's been a starter so has the experience . . . he's proven under pressure he can catch the ball."

-more-

Banks led all receivers in the spring game catching eight passes for 82 yards. Schmidt, a two year letterman, has a career total of 20 receptions for 298 yards but last year only caught seven for 144 yards as a chronic hamstring injury sidelined him midway through the year.

Charlie Vinson (Monticello), a 6-0, 200 sophomore, begins fall drills as the No. 1 tight end. Vinson was redshirted last fall after switching from running back so this will be his first varsity action.

"Charlie is clearly No. 1 in that he's caught the ball well, blocked better than anyone else there and is getting a grip on the position as a whole," says Molde, who added that Vinson still needs to add some strength and weight.