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# Panther Sports News

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## DEFENSIVE BACKFIELD (FIFTH IN A SERIES)

CHARLESTON, IL--Dan Fallon (Crystal Lake-Grant) and Brian Newby (Chicago-Simeon) are assured of starting in Eastern Illinois University's defensive backfield but the remaining two positions will be determined during fall camp.

The most significant change is on the coaching side. For the first time in five years the secondary will have a new person in charge. Defensive coordinator Larry Edlund will specifically coach the DBs along with his overall responsibility for that side of the ball.

Edlund inherits a group that is mostly untested. Fallon, a strong safety, is the only returning starter. The rest are either transfers or have been subs.

Fallon, a senior, started last year at strong safety but also has experience at outside linebacker. He tied for 10th on the team in tackles with 52 including 4½ QB sacks and three pass interceptions.

"Dan's definitely our team leader in the secondary," Edlund says. "He makes the calls and keeps us organized back there, plays the pass well and is one of the team's best hitters."

Newby, a junior, has been a two year backup at both corner and safety but has settled in at left corner. "Brian did a decent job in the spring . . . he was our leading pass interceptor," says Edlund. "He needs some improvement on technique but should get that through experience since this is his first real chance at starting."

Juco transfer James Boyd (Santa Ana, CA-Santa Ana CC) and Jerry Jackson (Vicksburg, MS-Hinds JC), an '83 transfer who underwent knee surgery last fall, are competing at the other corner.

Boyd was a JC Blue Chip All-American with 11 interceptions in each of the past two seasons, and may have a slight edge coming into camp. "As he learned the system James got better with each spring practice but still needs work on pass coverage."

Jackson's knee surgery has clouded his future but he was healthy all spring and re-established his status as a starting candidate. "Jerry has all the tools . . . he's quick, good speed but needs to work on consistency."

Free safety presents the most problems. Three year squad member Reggie Drew (Panama City, FL-Triton JC) is listed No. 1 on the charts but also may be the most vulnerable to get bumped.

Drew has bounced between wide receiver and the secondary for a couple years but will be strictly a free safety in his senior year. A former state record holder for pass reception yardage in an IHSA championship game, Drew "has the tools but has been somewhat inconsistent," says Edlund. "But he's a good hitter and reacts to the ball well."

Edlund, though, may be switching some corners to fit all the pieces together therefore sophomore Bob Bronaugh (Rantoul) has become a possible starter.

Officially listed as a backup strong safety, where Bronaugh ends up is yet to be determined. He got a handful of tackles playing on special teams last fall.

"Bob is a strong player with decent quickness and the versatility to play in several situations. He's young but is very consistent considering the amount of playing time he's had."

Two redshirt freshmen, Eric Landstrom (Wheaton-Central) and Barry Gravenhorst (Effingham), will be backups at free safety and corner, respectively. Both are converted running backs. "Landstrom played a little in high school so has picked up the system quite well. Gravenhorst has a ways to go but hustles, is a good hitter and has decent speed . . . he should play on special teams.

"This group is similar to other segments . . . young and/or without much experience so our success will depend upon how fast we can mature. We are asking them to play more zone and they did a pretty good job in the spring. Now our task is to refine that in fall camp," Edlund said.