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08/16/1984 - Offensive Backs

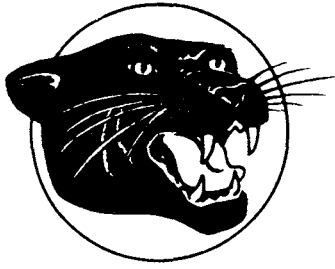
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Panther Sports News

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OFFENSIVE BACKS
(FOURTH IN A SERIES)

8/16/84
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CHARLESTON, IL--Of Eastern Illinois University's four top running backs, two have never carried the ball in collegiate competition and the other two have combined for only 250 career yards.

Needless to say there's little experience in the '84 Panther backfield as replacements are sought for graduated All-American Kevin Staple, who departed as EIU's No. 2 career rusher (3296 yards).

The cupboard isn't bare, though, as competition may spur respectable performances from some unheralded yearlings and vets.

The most experienced is junior Roy Ellis (Chicago-Manley), a two year letterman, who is listed in Staple's vacated halfback spot. Ellis lettered as a frosh getting 108 yards, was redshirted in '82 and then subbed last year gaining 120 yards in six games.

"Roy has improved his blocking and receiving, and therefore comes in No. 1. He has enough speed," says segment coach Rob Kuhlman, "and since I've been here has developed more as an inside runner. He still needs to improve his overall concentration."

Either senior Tom Fendley (Norridge-Ridgewood) or junior Calvin Pierce (Robbins-Oak Lawn Richards) will start at fullback. Fendley enhanced his position in the spring drills which he culminated by rushing 70 yards in the Blue-White game. A transfer from Triton JC, he "is a good hardnosed inside runner, a good blocker and receiver but lacks game experience," says Kuhlman.

Pierce ran five times for 22 yards so essentially is another untested on Saturday afternoons. "Calvin is a finesse type runner who does a pretty decent job of blocking His handicap is the same as most . . . he lacks experience."

Redshirt freshman DuWayne Pitts (Detroit-MacKenzie) will push Ellis at halfback. "DuWayne is an excellent receiver out of the backfield and has really improved since last season so we are predicting an excellent future here. Typical of most younger

OFFENSIVE BACKS
ADD 1

players, he needs to get bigger, strong and work on blocking skills," Kuhlman explained.

Pitts prepped at Detroit's MacKenzie HS where he earned Wayne County (Detroit) offensive 'player of the year' honors as senior. He once rushed for 238 yards in a single game.

Two other redshirt freshmen are Kevin Hunter (Detroit-King), who is only 5-8, 155, and Bernard Holland (Olympia Fields-Thornwood), who is a heftier 5-10, 180.

Due to playing baseball, Holland was setback some by missing spring drills but his natural ability may propel him back to the forefront before the season ends.