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Panther Sports News

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Aug. 28, 1984
LS-AS-FB STATE-
FB OPP 228

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHARLESTON, IL--With preseason practice behind them, Eastern Illinois University's youthful football Panthers will see how far they have progressed as they kickoff the 1984 season at Grand Valley State Saturday.

Game time is 12:30 CDT at Lubbers Stadium. Grand Valley is located in Allendale, (MI), located just outside Grand Rapids.

These two teams met last fall for the first time when a seasoned Panther unit defeated the Lakers, 35-21. The 21 points was the most anyone scored on EIU's nationally ranked defensive unit last fall.

Therefore, Grand Valley, with 29 lettermen returning from a 4-5 season, can expect to be a slight favorite in the opener for both teams. The Lakers top returnee is QB Jim Lynch, who is expected to rewrite the GVS record books after completing 254 passes in 538 attempts for 40 TDs and 4074 yards in a two year career.

EIU, on the other hand, will start just four defensive people and one on offense that were in on the kickoff in last fall's season finale against Indiana State in the NCAA I-AA playoff game.

***** GAME NOTES *****

THE GAME: Eastern Illinois University (0-0) at Grand Valley State (0-0) at 12:30 CDT, Saturday, September 1, Lubbers Stadium, Allendale, MI.

RADIO: All the action can be heard on 50,000 watt WLBH-FM beginning at 12:15 with the Al Molde pre-game show. Ken Wooddell calls the play-by-play with Doug Bock providing commentary.

SERIES STANDING: EIU won the only previous meeting, 35-21, last fall.

COACHES RECORD: EIU's Al Molde, in his second season, is 9-3 at Eastern and 83-45-6 (64.2%) overall in 13 years. He's had ten winning seasons and four NCAA playoff teams as head coach at Central Missouri, Minnesota-Morris and Sioux Falls.

GVS's Bob Giesey, in his second season, has a 4-6 lifetime record. He previously was an assistant at Ball State.

EIU FOOTBALL
ADD 1

LAST YEAR: Kevin Staple (now graduated) broke a ten year single game rushing record getting 283 yards and scoring four TDs. QB John Rafferty completed 11-20 for 136 yards and a TD pass. The defense sacked the QB Jim Lynch five times and allowed only 103 yards rushing however Grand Valley scored 21 points, the most against EIU last season.

ABOUT GVS: Grand Valley returns five starters on offense including QB Jim Lynch who has thrown for 4074 yards, 40 TDs, 254-538 passes the past two years. Last year, though, Lynch threw more interceptions, 18, than TDs, 17. Brian Jones, who rushed for a team high 458 yards, returns. The major loss on offense is wide receiver Bill Lucksted, Lynch's favorite target, who caught 48 for 897 yards and 12 TDs. Seven starters return on defense led by all-conference linebacker Jeff Lynch, a twin brother of Jim. The Lakers were 4-6 overall and 3-3 finishing in a tie for fourth in the Great Lakes Conference.

WRIGHT'S QUEST: Split end Jerry Wright (Chicago-Collins) begins his quest for the all-time pass receiving yardage record. He currently has 1493 and needs just 705 to pass Willie White's all-time record 2197. Wright has topped 700 in each of the previous two seasons getting 779 last fall and 709 in 1982.

NO. 7: Although the Panthers are not a real threat for a third straight berth in the NCAA I-AA playoffs, they are setting aim on a seventh straight winning season. EIU is the winningest team in Illinois the past six years with a combined mark of 56-18-1. During this stretch the Panthers have been in four tournaments winning the 1978 NCAA II championship, finishing second in 1980, reaching the quarterfinals of I-AA in '82 and then losing a first round game to Indiana State last fall.

MOLDE ON HIS QUARTERBACKS: "Both Sean (Payton) and John (Rafferty) have done well this fall. Rafferty has shown more poise than before so even though we have been saying that Payton is No. 1, no final decision is going to be made until late in the week . . . it's that close between them. And both are likely to see action against Grand Valley State. I simply would like to think we have two starters at QB. That doesn't mean we're going to jerk one or the other out of a game just because they make a mistake or two . . . it just means that I have confidence in both."

MOLDE ON EIU: As you'd expect in the first game, we're going to be fairly basic. Without a doubt we're going to be passing a lot because we have several who can catch the ball particularly well . . . but also the running game is the hardest to get going behind a new line. (Bernard Holland has looked great all camp . . . he's our best back by a long shot."

MOLDE ON GRAND VALLEY: "They were fairly basic last year when we played them and I suspect they will be similar this fall . . . use an I-Back on offense and 50 defense playing it pretty straight. Our defensive staff has really been impressed with their quarterback (Jim Lynch) . . . he can drop back and roll, and do either equally well. It will be quite a challenge for a young group like ours to go on the road the first game and face someone with his talents."

NO SENIORITIS: Of EIU's top 44 players only eight are seniors. There are 15 juniors in the bunch with 11 sophomores and ten freshmen. Altogether there are only 18 lettermen out of 83 players on the roster that survived preseason camp.

EIU FOOTBALL
ADD 2

INJURY REPORT: The only casualty among the expected starters is cornerback Brian Newby (Chicago-Simeon) who will miss the game with a separated shoulder. ✓JC transfer James Boyd (Santa Ana, CA-Santa Ana CC) will move to his spot with Jerry Jackson (Vicksburg, MS-Hinds JC) taking over at right corner.

OPPONENTS THIS WEEK: Indiana State hosts Wayne State
Northeast Missouri hosts Nebraska-Omaha
Toledo is open
Ferris State is open
Illinois State hosts Lincoln (MO) University
Southern Illinois at Tulsa
Western Illinois hosts Central Missouri
Southwest Missouri at Drake
Northern Iowa hosts Winona State
Western Kentucky is open

TENTATIVE STARTERS:

<u>OFFENSE</u>			<u>DEFENSE</u>		
SE	86	Charlie Vinson (6-0, 205, So.)	LT	85	Tom Moskal (6-2, 240, Jr.)
LT	75	Del Pittman (6-3, 275, Jr.)	NG	94	Pete Schaub (6-0, 270, So.)
LG	66	Bob Benning (6-0, 235, So.)	RT	77	Randy Harms (6-2, 210, Sr.)
C	55	Tim Wyatt (6-0, 235, Jr.)	SSB	58	Chris Nelson (6-1, 200, Fr.)
RG	79	Mike Kuhn (6-2, 245, Sr.)	ILB	33	Tyrone Covington (5-10, 210, Sr.)
RT	62	Steve Bonnes (6-3, 245, So.)	ILB	59	Dave Ferguson (6-2, 210, Sr.)
SE	9	Jerry Wright (5-11, 175, Sr.)	WSB	57	Will Smith (6-2, 200, Jr.)
QB	18	Sean Payton (6-0, 185, So.)	LCB	5	James Boyd (5-11, 165, Jr.)
HB	35	Bernard Holland (5-10, 185, Fr.)	RCB	26	Jerry Jackson (5-9, 180, Jr.)
FB	39	Tom Fendley (5-11, 190, Jr.)	SS	22	Dan Fallon (5-10, 190, Sr.)
FL	2	Roy Banks (5-10, 180, So.)	FS	4	Reggie Drew (6-1, 180, Sr.)

PUNT RETURNS: 9 Jerry Wright (5-11, 175, Sr.), 23 Barry Gravenhorst (5-9, 170, Fr.)
KO RETURNS: 23 Barry Gravenhorst (5-9, 170, Fr.), 6 Eric Landstrom (5-11, 170, Fr.)
PUNTER: 41 Evan Arapostathis (5-9, 160, Jr.), 46 Brian Necessary (5-11, 190, Fr.)
PAT, KICKOFFS: 25 Dave Strauch (5-9, 185, Jr.), 1 Steve Berryman (5-11, 145, Jr.)
HOLDER: 81 Jim Schmidt (5-10, 170, Sr.)
LONG SNAPPER: 56 Barry Wolfe (6-2, 250, Jr.), 55 Tim Wyatt (6-0, 235, Jr.)