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02/12/1986 - Football Signs Sixteen New Players

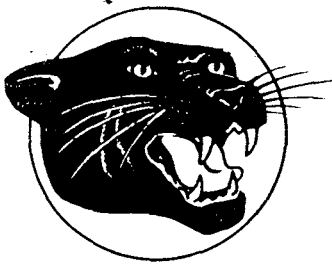
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Panther Sports News

EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY, Charleston, IL 61920

DAVID KIDWELL, *Sports Information Director*

OFFICE: (217) 581-2920

HOME: (217) 345-4166

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHARLESTON, ILL (February 12, 1986)--Eastern Illinois University announces the signing of 16 players to national letters of intent to play football for the Panthers next fall.

Head Coach Al Molde has inked eight defensive players, seven offensive players and one placekicker. Nine of the in-coming players are freshmen while seven are junior college transfers.

"I'm very pleased with the group of players we brought in this year," notes Molde. "We needed to beef-up some areas on defense and also improve some depth problems at wide receiver. I'm very excited about the two quarterbacks we brought in to learn our system. They both have tremendous potential."

Headlining the bumper recruiting crop are a pair of stellar prep signal-callers and a wide receiver from the Windy City.

Warrenville, Ill. product BURGESS WATTS was a two-year starter at quarterback for Wheaton Central High School in suburban Chicago. The 6-2, 170-pounder threw for more than 2600 yards and 20 TDs in his final two years for the Tigers. He was an All-DuPage Valley Conference pick as a senior while also being named to the Champaign NEWS-GAZETTE's 100 Special Seniors. The DuPage Valley Conference also produced Eastern's current quarterback--All-American Sean Payton.

"Burgess is a natural thrower," explains his prep coach John Thorne. "He is good leader and is extremely competitive. Burgess hates to lose. It's a lot of fun to watch him throw the ball."

EIU also signed Fairfield, OH native JOHN CURTIS. The Fairfield High School product was considered one of the top quarterback prospects in the state of Ohio. He completed 134 of 314 passes for 1956 yards and 18 yards in his final two years. Curtis led Fairfield HS to the Division I (Large-school) state playoffs as senior. His squad lost to eventual state champion Cincinnati Moeller.

"John has got awfully good feet and he's a pretty pure passer," states Fairfield head coach Ben Hubbard. "Eastern Illinois has got an excellent recruit. John has always been a winner."

MARCUS O'NEAL-- also a member of the Champaign NEWS-GAZETTE's 100 Special Seniors--signed with the Panthers. The 5-10, 165-pound wide receiver is from Calumet Park, IL and prepped at Leo High School in the Windy City's Catholic League. O'Neal was named to the coaches' first-team All-Catholic League squad each of the last two seasons. The speedster averaged 22 yards per catch on 32 receptions as a senior. He also averaged 32 yards per kickoff return and 24 yards per punt return.

"For the last two years, he has been the number one receiver in the Catholic league, " says Leo head coach Bob Foster. "The catches he made were unbelievable."

Eastern also signed a couple of local prep standouts--JEFF OETTING and MIKE SCROGGINS. Oetting (is expected to sign on Thursday) played at Charleston High School where he was a first-team All-Apollo Conference selection on defense and second-team on offense. The 6-4, 205-pounder caught a team-leading 22 passes for 292 yards and five touchdowns--tops on the squad. He is ear-marked to play linebacker for the Panthers. Oetting also received second-team all-area honors from the Decatur HERALD & REVIEW

Scroggins is a Taylorville, IL native who also was tabbed second-team all-area from the Decatur HERALD & REVIEW at tight end. At 6-5 and 220 pounds, he is EIU's tallest recruit. He caught 31 passes for 422 yards and three TDs for Taylorville High School.

GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN

Illinois--7
 California--6
 Michigan--2
 Ohio--1

POSITION BREAKDOWN

Defense--8
 Offense--7
 Kickers--1
 Linebackers--5
 Defensive Backs--3
 Wide Receivers--2
 Running Backs--2
 Quarterbacks--2
 Tight ends--1

1986 EASTERN ILLINOIS FOOTBALL RECRUITS

NAME	HT	WT	POS	HOMETOWN (HS/JC)
John Curtis	6-0	175	QB	Fairfield, OH (Fairfield HS)
Richard Ehmke*	5-9	160	PK	Mesa, CA (Grossmount CC)
Paskle Jackson*	5-10	180	DB	San Diego, CA (Southwest CC)
Glen Jones*	6-1	215	OLB	Los Angeles, CA (Long Beach CC)
Rick Labiak	5-10	170	DB	Joliet, IL (New Lenox HS)
Uasi Latu*	5-10	175	RB	Thousand Oaks, CA (Moorpark CC)
Jeff Oetting	6-4	205	OLB	Charleston, IL (Charleston HS)
Marcus O'Neal	5-10	165	WR	Calumet Park, IL (Leo HS)
Mike Scroggins	6-5	220	TE	Taylorville, IL (Taylorville HS)
Dimitri Stewart	6-2	210	OLB	Detroit, MI (Chadsey HS)
Ralph Stewart	6-1	180	WR	E.Chicago Hts., IL (Bloom Trail HS)
John Vanderstaay*	6-2	195	DB	Fullerton, CA (Fullerton CC)
Burgess Watts	6-2	170	QB	Warrenville, IL (Wheaton Central)
Bob Wilson *	6-3	225	LB	Long Beach, CA (Long Beach CC)
Paul Wilson*	6-0	208	OLB	Los Angeles, CA (LA Valley CC)
David Young	5-10	175	RB	Detroit, MI (Chadsey)

*Junior College Transfer