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Panther Sports News

EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY, Charleston, IL 61920

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHARLESTON, ILL. (March 20, 1986)--Springtime is usually reserved for the rights of playing baseball, getting a tan and making sure the yardwork is completed. However, on college campuses around the country Spring is also known as the time to get the football team in shape. It's no different at Eastern Illinois University.

The Panthers started spring practice Monday, March 17 with indoor workouts at Lantz Fieldhouse. After a week of practicing indoors--and a one week hiatus due to springbreak--Eastern will go outside to complete its scheduled workouts.

"Spring practice usually has a couple of standard goals," admits Eastern Illinois head coach Al Molde. "Number one...it gives you a chance to look at the younger players in your program...and the new players you brought in at semesters. Number two...the spring practices will enable us to experiment with some new ideas...both on offense and defense."

With 19 of 22 starters returning from last season's 6-5 squad, Molde realizes there aren't many holes to fill in the starting lineup. However, EIU isn't standing pat on the laurels of last year's team.

"We need to find a wide receiver to go opposite **Roy Banks** (Detroit/King)," states Molde. " **Wille Cain** (Chicago/Harper/Eastern Utah CC) and **Robert Dixon** (Los Angeles/Dorsey/ Los Angeles Valley CC) are the early frontrunners for the position. Four or five freshmen we brought in this coming fall may also see some playing time."

Teams don't only work on the physical aspects of their game in the spring. The mental approach to preparing for the season is worked on during the off-season.

"Our staff has been here a couple of years and I think we are at the point of fine-tuning our philosophies and strategies with our players," explains Molde who has compiled a 21-13 record at EIU over the past three seasons.

"One new thing we adopted this spring was a word association plan that is centered around the team concept. We are assigning a word a week or sometimes a word a practice that is important to the team. We feel if we develop a team concept...good things will follow. Hustle is the word this week...hopefully 'hustle' will generate good work habits."

Spring practice culminates with the Blue/Gray game April 19 (7:00 p.m.) at Charleston High School. The squad will be divided in half by a mock draft conducted by the team captains.

Behind All-American record-setting quarterback **SEAN PAYTON** (Naperville/Central), the vaunted Eastern Airlines passing attack opens up its 1986 campaign August 30 at Gateway Conference-rival Illinois State. The Panthers finished tied for third in the six-team league with Southern Illinois and Western Illinois. Northern Iowa won the league title with a 6-0 mark.

1986 EASTERN ILLINOIS FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

August 30	at Illinois State*	(6:30 p.m.)
September 6	NORTHEAST MISSOURI (Hall of Fame)	(6:30 p.m.)
September 13	at Northern Michigan	(Noon)
September 20	SOUTHERN ILLINOIS*	(6:30 p.m.)
October 4	LIBERTY UNIVERSITY	(6:30 p.m.)
October 11	NORTHERN IOWA* (Homecoming)	(1:30 p.m.)
October 18	at Western Illinois*	(1:30 p.m.)
October 25	at Southwest Missouri*	(2:00 p.m.)
November 1	WINONA STATE (Parent's Weekend)	(1:30 p.m.)
November 8	at Indiana State	(12:30 p.m.)
November 15	WESTERN KENTUCKY	(1:30 p.m.)

* Gateway Conference games