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04/17/1985 - EIU Football Panthers

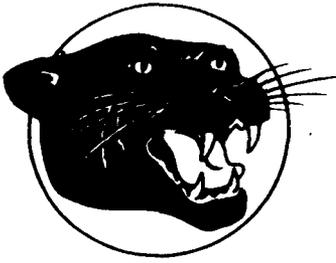
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Panther Sports News

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHARLESTON, IL--Eastern Illinois University's football Panthers passed the half-way point in spring drills with an emphasis on finding more depth in both offensive and defensive units.

Both head coach Al Molde and defensive coordinator Larry Edlund believe progress has been made towards those goals. "We're definitely showing signs of being a much quicker and more consistent team . . . on both sides of the ball," says Molde.

Edlund cited the experience factor as the most prominent reason for the defensive improvement. "This applies to a number of positions . . . just about everyone who played last year is doing better," he said.

Carl Parker (Evanston), a sophomore down lineman who played occasionally last year, has "really done a good job on pass rush . . . I'd say he's one who has improved quite a bit," Edlund commented.

Another newcomer is Bill Cochrane (Lake Zurich), an inside linebacker who was redshirted last year. He will vie for playing time with returning vets Rob DeVita (Wheaton) and Derick Wilhelms (Freeport).

Doyle Foster (Detroit-King) was academically ineligible last year but has returned to "play well at corner . . . having him back will help says Edlund. Plus transfer Greg Rhea (Cerritos, CA-Cerritos CC) has picked up the system quickly and "gives us some depth in the secondary."

Most of the interest with the offense has focused on the replacement for graduated all-american wide receiver Jerry Wright.

"Willie Cain is the No. 1 wideout at this point but Kevin Hunter has also looked good," says Molde. Cain attended Chicago Harper and Eastern Utah CC before transferring here at the semester.

With juniors Sean Payton (Naperville-Central) and John Rafferty (Mt. Carmel) at quarterback, Molde admits "we're pleased with that situation . . . both are doing well at what they do best.

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"I'm confident we'll be able to move the ball again. My concern this spring is that we're still missing several people with injuries . . . their absence hurts but they've been out all spring so it's been an opportunity for our younger players to get a lot of turns."

Eastern will conclude spring practice with the Blue-Gray intrasquad game on Saturday evening, April 27, at Charleston High School. Game time is tentatively 7:00.