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08/05/1985 - Varsity Football Candidates

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Panther Sports News

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHARLESTON, IL--Eastern Illinois University will welcome approximately 100 varsity football candidates, including the All-American passing combo of Sean Payton and Roy Banks, for the start of fall camp next week.

The players will report in two shifts with freshmen, transfers and other newcomers scheduled for equipment and testing on Monday morning (August 12).

The veterans will go through their pre-practice requirements on Thursday (August 15) with the first full squad double practice session coinciding with Panther Press Day on Friday (August 16).

The Panthers, who have 13 legitimate returning fulltime starters, will be on public display in a scrimmage at Mattoon High School from 3-5 p.m. on Saturday, August 24.

Then the opener is at Northeast Missouri on Saturday, Sept. 7 with a 7:30 night-time kickoff. The home opener is the next Saturday (Sept. 14) at 1:30 against Indiana State with the Hall of Fame inductions also taking place.

"Although we have the usual question marks at some spots, we have a solid corps of starters to build around so we approach this season with a great deal of optimism," said coach Al Molde.

"Naturally attention is focused on Payton and Banks . . . they have worked hard for the stats and honors, and I'm sure they're prepared to prove they deserve the All-American recognition."

Both juniors, Payton (Naperville-Central) at quarterback and Banks (Detroit-King) at wide receiver rewrote EIU's offensive record book in '84 accounting for a dozen school records and nearly 20 league marks.

Payton, who returns as one of the top ranking NCAA I-AA quarterbacks in several categories, threw for 28 TDs, 3843 yards and averaged 322.8 yards total offense.

Banks caught 17 TD passes for 1269 yards and is the top deep threat in EIU history catching five TD passes in excess of 60 yards.

Those two are not the only show on offense as two other junior receivers, Calvin Pierce (Robbins-Oak Lawn Richards) and Charlie Vinson (Monticello), combined for over 50 catches and 750 yards.

Running back DuWayne Pitts (Detroit-MacKenzie), who tallied 612 all-purpose yards, is the No. 1 rusher but Bernard Holland (Olympia Fields-Thornwood), who began '84 as the top back before a knee injury cut short his season, will be a strong challenger.

The line will be anchored by first team all-conference guard Bob Benning (Streator), 6-0, 235, Jr., and second team all-league tackle Steve Bonnes (Waukegan-West), 6-3, 245, Jr.

Preseason interest will focus on the replacement for graduated All-American receiver Jerry Wright. "We have several people competing for this spot and it wouldn't be fair to say that anyone is the leader at this point," said Molde.

Included among the candidates are Jeff Musgray (Alton), Willie Cain (Chicago-Harper/Eastern Utah CC), Charlie Williams (Los Angeles, CA-Triton JC), Kevin Hunter (Detroit, MI-King) and Santiono Dyer (Chicago-Harper).

Tom Moskal (Lake Zurich), a 6-2, 250 senior defensive end, who was picked along with Banks on The Sporting News preseason I-AA All-American list, will be gunning for his fourth letter as well as postseason honors.

Ed Nailon (San Diego, CA-San Diego City CC), who came on strong to earn first team all-conference honors as a corner/linebacker, is likely to go at free safety this fall.

"These two veterans will be called upon to lead what we believe will be an improved defense," said Molde. "We need some more depth on the line and the secondary, and will channel our efforts in that direction during the next couple weeks."