

1998 EFL Preview

July 9, 1998

Patriot Ledger

Joining Penn on the sidelines is the league's all-time leading rusher Jay McGee of Brockton, who retired after last season. Also, veteran assistants Fred Turner and I.J. Gorman, along with offensive coordinator Dick Sheehan, John Gates as defensive coordinator, line coach Al Lockhart and assistant coordinator Tom McLaughlin.

Defense was the key to the Oilers attack last season, thanks to Chris Torem and Steve Venkus, who led the league in sacks. All-league linebacker Ryan Craig of North Quincy, one of this year's captains, cornerback Sam Pearson, linebacker Derek Rucker and defensive end Andy McCarthy will spark the defense.

The offense will combine a balanced attack behind all-league running back Anthony Comer and newcomer Chip Lupo, a 257-pound fullback out of Northeastern. Quarterback Chris Pryor is an EFL veteran.

Randolph also gets a bonus practice week, drawing a bye for the opening week of the 10-game regular-season schedule.

"We're a little light on offensive linemen, but with 45 to 50 guys out there every practice, I'm happy," Penn said. "We're thankful for the extra week, and we open up against an expansion team before we play three games on the road."

□

Here's a look at the league:

MARLBORO SHAMROCKS:

A minor league dynasty, Marlboro won its seventh straight league championship last season, finishing with a 17-0 record and both National Minor League titles (against Wisconsin and Virginia). Coach Bob Brennan brings a 45-league game winning streak in against a newcomer, the (Manchester) New Hampshire Wolfpack. Brennan and star quarterback Dave Palazzi also come in with a national reputation to uphold. Brennan (126-16) was named American Football Association Coach of the Year, while Palazzi was named National Minor League MVP. Both are members the AFA Minor League Football Hall of Fame.

BOSTON COWBOYS: Coming off a 7-2-1 season, a trip to the EFL title game and a spot in the national playoffs, the Cowboys are a legiti-

September 19
NH Wolfpack at Cowboys, 6
Randolph at Marlboro, 7:30

September 26
Marlboro at Middleboro, 7
Maine at Randolph, 7

PLAYOFFS

Oct. 3: Quarterfinals
Oct. 10: Semifinals
Oct. 17: Finals

mate contender. Coach Fred Rihbany said: "The character and skill level of the returners, coupled with the same prospects, will hopefully be the formula for raising this team to the next level."

CHARLESTOWN TOWNIES:

Quincy brothers Tony and John Green, who are the co-head coaches for the Holbrook-Avon high school team, are looking to improve on a 2-8 record. The team is led by 15-year veteran guard Jack Coneeney and team MVP Dan Ryan at tight end. Rick Lalis, a tackle from Quincy, is also expected to see plenty of action. The Townies lost the season-opener to Middleboro, 14-6, June 28.

MAINE BLIZZARD: In its rookie season, Maine finished at the bottom of the league standings but return a solid running back in Stewart Carpenter, who was third among league rushing leaders. Coach Jack Bell is lacking in numbers on both sides of the ball but is hoping Maine's defense will put the pressure on opponents. He said he's hoping for a .500 season.

MIDDLEBORO COBRAS:

EFL Coach of the Year Fran Cass has compiled a host of dangerous linebackers and running backs. Middleboro, 5-4-1 last season, advanced to the semifinals of the playoffs before bowing to Marlboro. RB Tony DaRosa and Rookie of the Year Jon Lindskog (QB) lead the Cobras, who haven't missed a playoff since 1985.

NEW HAMPSHIRE WOLF-

PACK: A new entry, taking the spot left open by the Granite State Warriors (7-3). Coach Scott Boyle: "We must achieve a high performance to equal the standards currently maintained in the EFL. We consider this a great opportunity to compete in the oldest and finest amateur football league in the USA."

The Leominster Lions, 4-6 last season, have taken a year's leave of absence.