



# Randolph ready to hit gridiron again

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RANDOLPH - The Eastern Football League will take on a new look this summer, and so, too, will its local entry from Randolph. Many familiar names and faces have left the team, but the Oilers have replaced them with an abundance of young talent as they prepare for the 2007 season.

One familiar face is back for Randolph, veteran head coach Ed Penn, who decided to stay on the sidelines after announcing his retirement at the end of last season.

"There are a lot of changes in the league and we'll be playing some new teams, so it will be an exciting and challenging season for us," Penn said. "We lose many veterans who have either retired or moved to other teams, but we look forward to working with our new players."

The Oilers will be one of just four teams remaining in the Eastern Football League, along with Brockton, Charlestown and Clinton.

The Boston Panthers and Middleboro Cobras defected to other leagues in the winter, while the Rhode Island Prowlers disbanded after a winless season last year. And just two weeks ago, the perennial League power Marlboro Shamrocks announced that they were taking a year off. The Shamrocks won 12 consecutive EFL championships from 1991-2002.

The Oilers open the season 8 p.m. tomorrow against a non-league opponent, the Boston Bandits.

Of the 60-plus man Randolph roster, just 16 return to a team that finished in a three-way tie for the last playoff spot last season, eventually losing a play-in game to Charlestown.

However, the Oilers return veteran talent at quarterback, wide receiver and fullback. Quarterback Ryan Myers (Holbrook) returns from a solid season with 18 touchdown passes, nine of which were caught by deep threat Andre Barboza-Penn.

In the backfield, Charles Thomas is a punishing runner who gained more than 500 yards last season. Tailbacks Anthony Collins, former UNH Wildcat tight end/offensive tackle T.D. Thompson (Newton), and

tight end James Flaherty (Holbrook) will also be key contributors on offense. Flaherty will also handle kicking duties, replacing Dave Canavan, the retired 14-year veteran.

The Oilers also return a solid corps of defensive players, led by defensive backs Jesse Barboza-Penn, Matt Stanton (Randolph), Isiah Forbes, Merrick Johnson (Randolph) and Mark Royster. The Oilers were most hurt in losses in the offensive and defensive lines, and will need the new players to step up quickly to be successful.