

Footballers sought for English 11

Dave Leach traveled 3,000 miles to watch the Randolph-Middleboro high school football game last Friday.

Leach, the owner of a Division I American football team in Manchester, England, was in the states trying to line up players and coaches for next season, which starts on the practice field in March.

He watched Boston College practice last week and then attended the Eagles-West Virginia game Saturday. He'll be here until Saturday, Nov. 4.

"He's trying to develop a relationship," said Peter O'Kane, owner of the Randolph Oilers who was showing him around town. "They want to come here and play and we want to go there."

There are more than 200 teams playing American football in Great Britain, said O'Kane, 18 of them in elite Division I which includes two nine team conferences in England, Scotland and Wales and they are particularly interested in coaches.

"Football is not something they grew up with," said O'Kane. "We develop players slowly through Pop Warner, high school and colleges. Over there, American player-coaches run clinics for players who are already playing. They are especially attracted to good coaching."

The English season starts with the first practice sometime in March and runs for five months

through the playoff finals in August. Jim Turner, the Oilers' fullback who once captained Boston College, played there this past summer.

"Division I teams are allowed four American players," said O'Kane. "The English players are not paid but Americans are not only paid but get housing and an automobile."

The English Division I is sponsored by Budweiser to the tune of \$1.6 million for the next three years. Leach's team is sponsored by Northwest Airlines.

Leach wound up viewing American football in New England because Gordon McCaffrey of Arlington served as his team's player coach

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