

Oilers to host exhibition game

By Bob Buckley
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RANDOLPH — The Randolph Oilers begin their 18th season with something it has never had before — possession of the Eastern Football League championship.

However, for coach Bob Turner and his Oiler squad, that was then and the future is now. Actually, the official beginning of the 1991 EFL season is July 12, but for those who need their football fix, the Oilers are holding a Father's Day Special.

This Sunday, Randolph will play host to one of the two new entries in the EFL as the Oilers take on the Maine Lions in a exhibition game at 2 p.m. at Memorial Field.

The EFL has expanded its horizons as Methuen and Maine join the 10-team league. It is an ambition undertaking for the league, which had eight teams within a 60-mile radius before going to north to Portland this season.

It is not the first time the EFL has gone north. The Portland Seahawks were an active member in the early 1970s, but they disbanded in the middle of the decade. But in the 1990s, the Maine Lions are alive and well and with roots within the Randolph organization.

Former Oiler Peter Vorias is the current president of the Maine entry as well as an active player. It is he who laid the foundation for the franchise and it appears he learned well from the Oiler general manager Peter O'Kane.

"Vorias always kept an interest in the league even after he moved from the area," said O'Kane. "He has always wanted to get a team in Portland and now he has found the people to help him get the program started."

The reaction to the EFL has been very positive by the folks in Maine.

"High school football is very popular in Maine," said O'Kane. "The media coverage has been very extensive. Businesses have gotten involved. Vorias has done a great job getting the entire state of Maine involved with this team."

The Lions anticipate fielding a competitive team as this is not your typical expansion team. The Lions have a strong belief that they will be an above .500 team and with an offensive line averaging 270 pounds apiece, there could be some validity to that statement.

However, the Lions have a ways to go before they can match the past two seasons the Oilers have had. Randolph has a two-year record of 20-3 including a perfect 12-0 record in 1990. The Oilers capped off their championship season with a 27-21 victory over Marlboro in the EFL title game.

"The best thing about our situation is that we have 50 veterans returning," said O'Kane. "Usually when you have a group that has been together as long as we have and you win a championship, usually a number of players don't come back. They go out as champs. But that just shows the desire we have coming into the season."

The Oilers not only have the Witts, Pinas, Conneys and Cassfords returning, but they have added quality to the ranks. Former University of Massachusetts star Bill Shaughnessey will back up veteran quarterback Bobby Witt.

The Oilers have also added former Whitman-Hanson and Plymouth State College star Tracey Manter; former Boston College player Mike Walsh from Whitman; and former Braintree football coach and current Stonehill College assistant Mike Tosone.