The Daily Egyptian Football Preview, September, 2009

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FOOTBALL PREVIEW
New offensive line coach is familiar face

Phil Meyer returns to Salukis

Phil Meyer has been coaching since 1984, but this year he returned to the Salukis, where he served as offensive coordinator under head coach Bob Smith from 1989 to 1993.

Head coach Dale Lennon said Meyer’s experience, not just with the Salukis, earned him the position. “It was a good fit and he meshed well with all the current coaches. We just felt he was the best man for the job,” Lennon said. “Really it’s his experience, and we have an experienced staff already, but bringing him in added to that experience.”

Meyer has a long history to draw experience from.

He began coaching at Southeast Missouri State as an offensive line coach from 1984-1985 and took over as the offensive coordinator from 1986-1997. He went on to coach offensive line at Northern Arizona and Western Illinois (1988, 1990).

Meyer also took over as the offensive coordinator for Illinois State in 1994 before taking a job as tight end coach in Missouri State’s coaching staff. Meyer returned to the Salukis this season as offensive coordinator under head coach Bob Smith from 1999 to 2001.

Meyer received a head-coaching position at division III Wisconsin-Oshkosh and served there from 2002-2004. As head coach, Meyer lead the train to 31 wins in seven seasons, including a 16-4 mark in non-conference games.

Meyer was an offensive line coach for the University of Minnesota from 2007-2009. “He has been apart of some major D-I programs,” Lennon said. “He knows how the college game works.”

Meyer marks the third different offensive line coach the Salukis have had in as many years. Scott Focht was with the team in 2008. Fuchts replaced Matt Lineberger who served seven seasons with SIU before going to Northern Illinois University to become its offensive coordinator.

Senior right tackle Shawn Smith said the changing of coaches has been tough, but beneficial. “It’s difficult to go from coach to coach each year and start over new, but you do get to acquire different skills they each teach,” Smith said. “You try so many different techniques that each of the coaches give you. Once of the things that sticks with you just go from there to become a better football player.”

Smith said Lennon let the offensive line see the different coaching candidates so the team could choose the best one for its needs. “It has given us a lot of new ideas,” Meyer said.

“Coach Lennon is a real class act and a great guy to work with. The players have no complaints at all and they work ethic is really good,” Meyer said. He added that the players are anxious for the home opener Saturday.

“Coming back to SIU has gone well for the coach so far.”

“It’s kind of a neat deal for me to come back,” Meyer said. “My wife graduated from here even, so it’s been a nice transition and my kids are doing really well. It has been a lot of fun so far.”
MEMORIES

October 23, 1937
The final game was played at the new stadium, McAndrew
Stadium. The school was still known as Southern Illinois
College, and the fans held a final home game for Saluki fans.

September 27, 2008
Larry Womack returned the game's opening kickoff 97
yards for a touchdown, but Northern Illinois later
scored to take over. It was the most exciting game in recent
McAndrew history.

December 8, 2007
St. Louis Rats quarterback Joe Plisko ruled the Delaware
spread last as Memorial Stadium to knock off Illinois
in the semifinals of the Division I-AA playoffs. The Salukis
could not convert on their two possessions, including a Nick
Hill interception in the final minute. The game was the best
for KSU, who accepted to enter the Missouri Valley
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November 1
The final regular season football game
at McAndrew Stadium. Athletic Director
planned to get as many people back as
possible. Potential guests include...
Look at significant moments in the stadium's history

October 15, 1938
Just two weeks after their first home game in the new stadium, the Salukis won for the first time in the stadium with a 6-0 victory over Arkansas State.

1943
This season officially started McAndrew Stadium in honor of William McAndrew, the president of the ISU athletics program and the first head coach of the football program.

October 4, 1958
Illinois 10-game winning streak ended against Ohio State University in the season opener with a 26-0 victory. The Salukis lost on the final play of the game, then continued at the two-point conversion. Late fourth quarter touchdown caught the 6,193 fans from Bill Norwood on the Saluki within two, and then lost 9 in the game for the nine most winning seasons.

October 29, 1960
SIU finally saw its first conference title in 20 years with a 46-8 victory over Eastern Michigan. The Salukis scored two in the last seconds of the game and then set a school record with 31 points in the fourth quarter.

October 28, 1967
A 11-11 tie was given a chance to decide the tie. Tula Hauhorn. Linebacker Carl Maaske late fourth-quarter interception return to Tullis (60-yard field goal set up the game-winning field goal from Ralph Gayten. Sling the Salukis to a 16-14 victory.

December 10, 1983
Not even rain and snow could derail the Salukis in the first-ever Division I-AA semifinal game at McAndrew Stadium. The Salukis won against Nevada (then Nevada-Sparks) with 14 unanswered points in the fourth quarter to a 23-7 victory. The win sent SIU to the Division I-AA championship, where the Salukis played the University of Alabama at Birmingham, 48-7 and took the school's national championship.

September 13, 1980
The largest crowd in McAndrew Stadium history, 25,500 people came out for Mac Hempel. Dan Hempel was a wide receiver who suffered a career-ending spinal cord injury while attempting to recover from the previous season. The injury resulted in the Salukis' first win.

1973
The Salukis played in the Las Vegas Bowl before the 1973 season. Additional seating was added.

2009
A football game is scheduled to take place this fall. Athletic Director Mike McKiernan said he was looking for the final game of the year as he carried his Saluki to the New York Giants running back Brandon Jacobs.

14, 2009
Stadium rich with history, leaks

Goodbyes are always tough.
It is with a heavy heart and a little bit of tears that SIU fans begin their long farewell to McAndrew Stadium, the home of the Salukis since 1937.

Some students may only know it as the building across from the Student Center or that legs, shabbily looking structure they see every morning as they cross the bridges from the dorms. However, these students are missing out of the most charming buildings on campus.
Sure it is not what you would call state-of-the-art or structurally sound, but McAndrew should still be viewed as an illustrious part of SIU's history.

In a way, it's a bit like Chicago's Wrigley Field—except there are no troughs in McAndrew.

Both have been a part of their team's lives since before World War II. Both have seen long stretches of ineptitude on the field. Both have small, narrow aisles with uncomfortable bench seating, but at least at McAndrew there is no threat of the overhead concrete chunks falling on you.

After this season, the Salukis will move into their new billion-dollar stadium next to the basketball arena.

While it may never have puddles near the concession stands, no blacktop and rain, there is something the new stadium will take years to develop: character.

Some people say McAndrew scares them, especially with the rumor the stadium would collapse if everybody were to jump at once.

But there is definitely some personality. How else could one describe the hard, steel bench seating that makes like the sound of a thousand buffaloes stampeding as the fans kick it when there is a critical play on the field?

On Lew Hartwig Track, named after one of the greatest track coaches in school history. The track will need a new home next season, as it will not carry over into the new field. The structure of McAndrew also prevents the start of any crowd waves, how can that be a bad thing?

Then there is the long history that should not be ignored. Say goodbye to the field where the only Saluki able to win a national championship played, or the field where Jerry Kill revived a program that was long dormant.

So as we say goodbye to "The Mac," remember that change is not always for the better. Sure, the new stadium may be structurally sound, but that old charm that makes McAndrew so appealing will be hard to replace.

Character is something money cannot buy.

DEAR SALUKIS, HOPE TO SEE YOU HERE

Edtha Blakertz | Daily Egyptian

Fans look on as there is a break in the action during the Salukis' 40-21 victory over North Dakota Nov. 1, 2008. This is the final season for McAndrew Stadium, which will host its final regular season game Nov. 14. The stadium has been home to the Salukis since 1937.

RYAN VOYLES
rvoyles@slu.edu

McAndrew deserves to go out with a bang

VOYLES' VISIONS

Stadium rich with history, leaks

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Character is something money cannot buy.
True freshman runs with opportunity

Strother only freshman on team not red-shirted

Derek Robbins
Daily Egyptian

There are 16 freshmen on the SIU football team and all of them have been redshirted — except for one.

Running back Steve Strother is the lone freshman on the Salukis to receive any playing time this season. Running back coach Steve Crouchley said he is longer by what he saw from the freshman.

"He's got a good feel for the game. He has good hands as well as he can catch the ball out of the backfield," Crouchley said. "He is pretty dynamic and he has some speed as well. We like his skills and his quickness."

Crouchley said as long as Strother can contribute to the play of the team, the coaches would find a way to get him some playing time.

"We're looking to get him some experience so he can help us down the road. Coach said, 'We're not trying to put pressure on any guy thought. We definitely try to coach our players and push them a little bit to be successful. We do that with all our backs, not just Strother."

"We're looking to get him some experience so he can help us down the road."

Steve Crouchley
SIU running backs coach

Strother also earned second-team all-conference honors and was team captain and MVP during his high school career.

Head coach Dale Lennon said he was impressed by what he has seen out of the young running back.

"He has good speed, good balance — the things you look for in a running back," Lennon said. "He has the biggest running back out there, but he definitely has that explosive speed where he can just turn it on and create separation from himself and the defense."

In the Marshall game on Sept. 5, Strother ran for 100 yards on six carries and scored three touchdowns.

Strother also caught three passes for 126 yards. He has scored 11 touchdowns and rushed for 398 yards.

Lennon said he played a key role in giving him playing time. He said that even though Strother showed a lot of potential, it was difficult to tell how he would perform the rest of the season.

"Because Strother had a good camp," Lennon said he was ready to compete at a high level, which his competitive high school conference helped prepare for.

"Many times he can break a tackle and run plays that should be dead into a big play," Lennon said. "He was able to do that at the high school level, so it's a pretty good conference and we're hoping that's what we see from him here."

Strother couldn't expect for a team policy restricting freshmen from speaking to media.

ALTO VINEYARDS

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GO SALUKIS
Change of guard for Smith

It's the same side of the field, but an entirely different position. Senior right guard Shawn Smith made the change from right guard to right tackle for the 2009 season. As a right guard, Smith earned in 38 of 39 possible starts and earned the Commissioner's Academic Excellence Award, which requires a minimum of a 3.2 grade point average.

The change in positions has been a different experience for the senior.

"It's definitely different and it is definitely a change," Smith said. "I'm all isolated on the outside. It was a lot different being on my own out there. It's no problem; I'll get used to it, and with a game under my belt I know what I need to work on, and I think I'll be just fine."

Smith said he allowed a sack in the first game of play against Marshall, which the Salukis lost 31-28 Sept. 5. Smith said there was an error in communication.

"I really didn't see the guy, so it wasn't like I was beat physically," Smith said. "Along with the change of position, Smith also has a new offensive line coach in Phil Meyer — the third one in three years for SIU. Meyer said he has only known Smith as a right tackle, and said he would not have guessed that Smith started as a guard if he was asked.

"He is doing a really nice job at right tackle for us," Meyer said. "He knows the system real well, works hard and catches a lot of film. For him it has been a smooth transition, especially considering I didn't know him as a guard. So he has done a nice job for us."

Meyer said the offensive line as a whole has been performing well together and is getting on the field.

"I feel pretty good about these guys," Meyer said. "Hopefully we are able to have some success running the ball this Saturday and through the rest of the season."

SIU outraug the football Bowl Subdivision's Marshall 18-7 in its first game of the season.

Smith has been with the team since 2005 and is in his final year of eligibility for the program.

"The team is looking to Smith as well as the other seniors for leadership. The main job of these guys is to pass on the legacy," Meyer said. Head coach Dale Lennon said, "We have a certain way of doing things, and that is something that the upperclassmen are responsible with passing down. That's how the things here at SIU."
Jordan tackles way into record books

All-Conference player leads by example

Ryan Voyles

Putting an NFL Pro Bowler in the record book was only a matter of time for Brandon Jordan.

The senior inside linebacker continued his usual on-camp themes and record books in the Sooners' 31-28 loss to Marshall on Sept. 5.

Jordan led the team with 12 tackles, one sack and two tackles for losses.

The performances earned Jordan the Missouri Valley Conference Defensive Player of the Week award, the third honoree he has earned this season.

Junior quarterback Chris Dickerson said Jordan broke records because he never takes a play off.

"He's a guy who has been here so long, been good at that time, it only makes sense he would break some records," Dickerson said. "Jordan never seems to have an off game. He's always out there doing what he does." Dickerson quarterback Chris Dickerson said he loves having Jordan on the team for a simple reason: he kept teams from scoring.

"He's a well-knowledge guy. He makes a lot of plays for us. He's really athletic, very talented and I'm glad he's on our side," Dickerson said. Jordan has a family history of football excellence.

His father, Buford Jordan, was a standout running back at McNeese State, setting the then-all-time rushing record for Louisiana college football.

Buford Jordan spent seven seasons in the NFL, scoring eight touchdowns while used primarily as a blocker for San Francisco and Dallas.

But Brave's Jordan has made his own mark on the college game. He needs only 30 more tackles to crack the top-10 for most in Saluki history. With one more finishable, Jordan will also enter the record book.

Despite all of his records, Jordan said he just wants to help the team and set an example for the younger guys.

"I'm trying to be a role model for the younger guys, to inspire them to play," Jordan said. "I know they're looking up to me for guidance in decision making, since I've been a starter since I was a freshman. I'm trying to make all the right decisions and do things right."

Brandon Jordan

Senior inside linebacker

Joe Roman | Daily Egyptian

Jordan is excited about his senior year.

"We're excited for our senior year," Jordan said. "This year we have a chance to do something in the final number one rankings."