

Blackhawks build this year's team

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The Iowa Blackhawks, Council Bluffs' indoor professional football team, made another key move to solidify its defensive unit by resigning their 2006 Defensive Player of the Year, Scott Yates, to a one-year contract.

The 5-foot-10, 200-pound defensive back finished last season with 56 tackles (second on the team) and led the Blackhawks with four fumble recoveries and five interceptions. He also tied teammate Chris Moore with two defensive touchdowns.

Yates, a graduate of Nebraska Wesleyan University, is the head football and track coach at Elk Horn-Kimballton High School. He also coaches junior high basketball.

"My main commitment to the Blackhawks organization is to win the championship," said Yates, "I don't care who it's against; I just want to get the thing done."

A second team All-League pick in 2006 at defensive back, Yates will team with (Chris) Moore to give the Blackhawks two league selections at the position. A five-year professional, Yates also excelled at track while at Nebraska Wesleyan.

"I'm 27 years old and in better shape now than I was five years ago," said Yates. "Hopefully all of my experience will help our team achieve the goals we set for the upcoming season."

Also signed were Ryan Kauffman, receiver; Elijah Simmons, running back and lineman Cameron Gales.

"The signing of these three guys is big for the Blackhawks," said head coach Mike Wolff, "They are important in the fact that they are quality players who can impact games."

Kauffman returns for his fourth season with the Blackhawks with a renewed intensity and desire to get a championship for the Iowa organization. "I've been working harder this off season than ever before," said Kauffman, "I'm faster and stronger and really looking forward to this season."

"Ryan gives us a receiver that can fill multiple roles," said Wolff. "He can play inside or outside. He can go deep or get first downs. He's also not afraid to go across the middle."

In 2006 Kauffman caught 17 passes for 200 yards and five touchdowns, missing a few games with a leg injury.

Simmons led the Blackhawks in 2006 with 24 touchdowns (21 rushing, three receiving) and scoring with 146 points. The big back finished with 344 yards rushing and caught 10 passes for another 109 yards.

"Elijah gives us an every down back that can pick up yards and kill clock when we have the lead," said Wolff, "He is at his best once our team is inside the five yard line. His 21 rushing touchdowns and one throwing touchdown are testament to that."

Gales comes to the Blackhawks this season after spending 2006 with the Kansas Koyotes. At 6-3, 330 he has the size and experience to be a solid performer this season.

"Cameron's size and strength gives us extreme flexibility on both sides of the ball," said Wolff. "We think he is a guy that can anchor our offensive line as well as play on our defensive line in goal line situations."

Gales explained that his goal for the season is to help the Blackhawks gain that elusive league title. "I want to help these guys get the monkey off their backs and get past Kansas," said Gales.

Note

The Blackhawks will hold their open cheerleading team tryouts Sunday at Fit N Fun Club for Women at 1 p.m. (check-in at 12:30 p.m.). Fit N Fun is located in the Sears wing of the Mall of the Bluffs.

Participants must be at least 19 years of age on or after Jan. 1, 2007.

For more information, or to download a registration packet, please visit www.iowablackhawks.com, e-mail cheer team coordinator, Liz Higgins, at RNLizzie@cox.net or call our office at (712) 366-9326.