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2009 Schedule

SEPT.
Sat., 5 at Saint Anselm ................. 1:00 p.m.
Sat., 12 MOUNT IDA ................. 1:00 p.m.
Sat., 19 COAST GUARD .......... 1:00 p.m.
Sat., 26 at UMass Dartmouth* ...... 12:00 p.m.

OCT.
Sat., 3 at Western New England* .... 1:00 p.m.
Sat., 10 ENDICOTT* ................. 1:00 p.m.
Sat., 17 NICHOLS* ................. 1:00 p.m.
Sat., 24 at Curry* .................... 1:00 p.m.
Sat., 31 MIT* .......................... 12:00 p.m.

NOV.
Sat., 7 at Salve Regina* ............. 12:00 p.m.
Sat., 14 NEFC Championship game .... TBA

* New England Football Conference game

2009 PSU Football Guide Credits

Editor: Kent Cherrington
Advertising: John Scheinman
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Panthers will have new look in attempt to repeat NEFC Championship

The Plymouth State football team has enjoyed two straight superb seasons, winning an ECAC post-season crown in 2007 and the coveted New England Football Conference championship in 2008. The Panthers are hoping to make it three in a row in 2009, but will have to do it with several new faces on the field.

PSU returns six starters on both offense and defense under seventh-year head coach Paul Castonia, the NEFC Coach of the Year in 2007 and the New England Division II/III Coach of the Year in 2008. Key strengths among the returnees include the offensive line, where four of the five starters are back, and the defensive backfield, which includes three returning starters. Castonia says the biggest holes to fill are defensive tackle, tight end and the entire offensive backfield.

“[We’re] trying to focus on who we have and not who we graduated,” said Castonia, “but you can’t overlook what we lost out of our offensive backfield. They will be greatly missed but we feel we have good people here that are ready to step in and handle the job.”

Opposing defenses are thrilled that graduation has claimed PSU’s entire offensive backfield, including star running back Jeff Mack, one of the top ball carriers in the nation the past two years (3,132 yards, 34 TDs) and the second-leading rusher in school history (3,944 yards, 43 TDs). Also gone are the seventh and eighth-leading rushers in school history in quarterback John DeMarco (1,932 yards, 35 TDs) and fullback Brandon Clough (1,328 yards, 12 TDs). They were key players that led PSU to a 19-3 record the past two years as one of the top rushing teams in the nation.

“In addition to losing good players, we’re losing good leaders,” said Castonia. “What chemistry this year’s team has and who provides leadership remains to be seen.”

Castonia says the success of the past two years can be a help to this year’s team, but warns the Panthers can’t live on their laurels.

“It’s a fine line between forgetting that they’re champions and remembering how they became champions,” said Castonia. “You can’t be living in the past but you have to remember how you got there.”

OFFENSE

The Panthers ran the football nearly 90 percent of the time last year and ranked seventh in the nation in rushing, and a big portion of their success was due to the strength of the offensive line. Four of the starters are back, including senior tackles Zac Duval and Matt Vahey, senior guard Mike Vahey and junior center Nick Fuccillo.

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The biggest question on offense might be who will carry the ball, with Mack, Clough and DeMarco out of the picture. Castonia is confident that the Panthers will be fine in that department.

“We have several guys who we think can step in there,” said the coach. “These guys got game experience the past couple of years when we had a big lead or when Mack needed a breather, so we have confidence that they will step up this season.”

Junior tailback Steve Campbell will likely get many of the carries. A starter on defense and special teams last year, Campbell also rushed for 345 yards and eight touchdowns as a reserve tailback, averaging a whopping 8.8 yards a carry.

Senior Jay Baird and junior Chris Francher should both see action at the fullback position. Both have performed well in the past when given an opportunity, and should be a strength for the team this fall. Baird rushed for 193 yards (6.2 avg.) and one touchdown last year and Francher added 156 yards (4.6 avg.) and two TDs.

Junior J.J. Brooks looks to move into the starting quarterback role. A former high school QB, Brooks has been a wide receiver for two years while waiting his turn to perform under center. He led the team in receiving last year with 18 catches, 476 yards and four touchdowns. Junior QB Alex Sobolov could also challenge for playing time.

Returning members of the Panther receiving corps include senior Alex Smith and juniors John Creamer and Luke Denio. They caught less than a dozen balls last year but Castonia said they and some others should be a strength for the team this season. The coach added that the tight end position is wide open, with sophomores James Liddel and Justin Kane the top candidates.

Castonia said he is uncertain whether the Panthers will run the ball as often as they did last year.

“If we can run it like we have in the past, we will,” he said. “If not, we’ll be a little more balanced. We’ll have to see what works.”

**DEFENSE**

While Mack was making most of the headlines for PSU last year, the Panther defense was quietly leading the NEFC in rushing, scoring and overall defense. Three of the six All-Conference defenders return to this year’s team.

“We’ve had success the past few years playing strong team defense,” said Castonia. “We don’t have one or two guys who stand out, but we feel we have strength all over the field. That’s what’s made our defense successful.”

The most veterans are in the Panther backfield, where junior corners Kevin Whalen and Dan Kelly and junior safety Zach Parsons return. Whalen is a two-time All-NEFC performer (Second Team in ’07, First Team in ’08) and Parsons was an All-Conference Second Team pick last year. The three combined for nine interceptions in 2008.

Junior Brian Castellucci is the only returning starter at linebacker. He was second on the team with 53 tackles last season and should backbone the unit this year. Sophomore Ian Culling and junior Mike Bruning are experienced linebackers and should see plenty of playing time.

PSU has both of its starting defensive ends back but graduated its two defensive tackles. The returning ends are senior Jim Sestito, who was First Team All-Conference last year after making 41 tackles and eight-and-a-half sacks, and junior Matt MacLean, who had 37 tackles and three sacks. Junior Jim Buckley and sophomore Pat Sullivan can fill in at defensive end, while senior captain Alex Battaglino, seniors Bill Horan and Mike Carone and former tight end Aaron Getz are top candidates to take over the defensive tackle spots.

**SPECIAL TEAMS**

Most of the special teams positions are wide open, and Castonia feels comfortable that the jobs will work themselves out in the preseason. The kicking position is open, for extra points, field goals and kick-offs. Sophomore Christian Mulcahy returns after serving as the team punter last season when PSU ranked seventh in the country in punt return defense.

The Panthers have a few options in the return game. Whalen has been the punt returner the past two years and could fill the spot again this year, or Castonia could look to a newcomer. J.J. Brooks was the top kick returner the past two years, but that is likely to change with him moving to quarterback.

**OUTLOOK**

While PSU broke Curry College’s five-year lock on the NEFC last season, Castonia says this year’s NEFC Boyd Division race could mark a transition of power.

“We lost of lot of guys, and I think Curry also had a large group of seniors,” said Castonia. “Same with UMass Dartmouth, which finished third. I think there are a lot of question marks in our conference and the race may be wide open.”
After two decades of coaching college football at all levels, Paul Castonia has enjoyed his most successful seasons the past two years at Plymouth State. He has re-established PSU as one of the dominant programs in New England small college football and a yearly challenger for the New England Football Conference championship.

Now is his seventh year at PSU, Castonia has worked his way up the ladder since joining the Panthers. After a winless first season in 2003 and a 9-19 record over the next three years, Castonia led PSU to back-to-back championship seasons in 2007 and 2008.

The Panthers posted a 9-1 overall record in 2007 with a second-place finish in the Boyd Division of the NEFC and a championship victory in the ECAC North Atlantic Bowl. They followed that up with a 10-2 mark in 2008, including the Boyd Division title (7-0), the NEFC Championship and a berth in the NCAA Division III Championship Tournament.

Castonia was recognized by being named NEFC Boyd Division Coach of the Year in 2007 and New England Division II/III Coach of the Year in 2008. They were well-deserved honors for Castonia, who had long paid his dues with coaching stints at Divisions 1-A, 1-AA, 2 and 3.

When Castonia took over in 2003 as the 11th head football coach in the program’s history, he was well prepared for the job, with previous coaching stops at the University of Rhode Island, University of Maryland, Hartwick College, Ferrum College, the University of Massachusetts Boston and Bryant University.

The Panthers have shown progress every season since Castonia arrived, and have built a solid foundation for success. But Coach Castonia is about more than wins and losses. While the Panthers no doubt aim to having a winning program year in and year out, being good students and quality citizens are equally as important.

“We recruit young men who want to graduate, and who are willing to work hard to be successful in the classroom and on the football field,” says Castonia, a 1986 graduate of Trinity College (Conn.) who earned a Master’s degree from the University of Rhode Island in 1989. “We try to put them in a position to succeed both as students and as football players.”

Castonia says the biggest rewards for him don’t come on Saturdays in the fall, but on graduation day in the spring.

“It’s very gratifying when a guy graduates and is excited about pursuing his chosen career,” says Castonia, “and he is using the habits and lessons he learned and developed on the football field in those endeavors.”

Coach Castonia, 45, and his wife Leslie reside in Ashland.

Office: 603-535-2761 e-mail: pfcastonia@plymouth.edu

The Castonia File

2003- Plymouth State University: Head Coach
2001-02 Bryant University: Defensive Coordinator
1998-00 UMass Boston: Head Coach
1993-96 Ferrum College: Off. Coordinator/Special Teams Recruiting Coordinator
1992 Hartwick College: Offensive Coordinator/Special Teams
1989-91 University of Maryland: Defensive Backs/Offensive Line/Running Backs/Special Teams
1986-88 University of Rhode Island: Graduate Assistant/Head JV Coach
Devin Zeman
Plymouth State '04
Associate Head Coach
Def. Coordinator/Def. Backs

Devin Zeman is now in his seventh season on the Panther Football staff, and his first as Associate Head Coach and Defensive Coordinator. He has also coached the linebackers and quarterbacks for several years each, as well as special teams the past four years. A native of Nashua, N.H., he is a former Panther defensive back who turned to coaching while earning his undergraduate degree.

Dan Fallon
Plymouth State '07
Linebackers

Dan Fallon is in his third season on the Panther staff after spending four years as PSU’s starting safety. The two-year co-captain led the team in tackles three times and was a First Team All-Conference selection as a senior in 2006. He received PSU’s John C. Foley Senior Leadership Award for 2006-07.

John Mihalko
Trinity '08
Defensive Line

John Mihalko is in his second season on the Panther staff, moving to defensive line coach this fall after coaching tight ends in 2008. A native of Shelton, Conn., Mihalko is a graduate of Trinity College, where he was a four-year center on football team, helping the Bantams to a 29-3 record and undefeated seasons in 2004 and 2005.

Lou Desloges
Southern Conn. ’69
Running Backs

Lou Desloges has been involved with Panther Football since 1976. He was an assistant from 1976-85, and served as head coach from 1986-93, winning four NEFC championships. He is PSU’s all-time winningest coach with a 55-15-3 record. After stints as an assistant at Bethany College and Dartmouth College, Desloges returned to Plymouth State as an assistant in 2001.

Tom Pabst
Offensive Line

Tom Pabst is now in his sixth season on the Panther Football staff, serving as a mainstay as offensive line coach. He has several prior years of coaching experience, including serving as the head football coach at Franklin (N.H.) High School from 1998-2003.

Tyler Scudder
West Virginia ’09
Receivers

Tyler Scudder is in his first season on the PSU Football staff. A native of Gettysburg, Pa., Scudder graduated from West Virginia after attending Susquehanna University (Pa.) for two years, where he was a reserve quarterback, receiver and kicker. He was a high school assistant last year in Morgantown, W.Va.

Brandon Clough
Student Assistant

Ryan Harrington
Student Assistant

Jim McGuire
Student Assistant

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<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Michael Malia</td>
<td>Fr.</td>
<td>LB</td>
<td>6-0</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>Watertown, CT/Watertown</td>
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<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>John Creamer</td>
<td>Jr.</td>
<td>RB</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>Hanover, MA/Abington</td>
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<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Nic DeMello</td>
<td>Fr.</td>
<td>OL</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>Alvirne, NH/Pinkerton Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Jim Sestito</td>
<td>Sr.</td>
<td>DL</td>
<td>6-1</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>Foxborough, MA/Foxborough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>Matt Sheehan</td>
<td>Fr.</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>5-11</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>Scituate, MA/Scituate</td>
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<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Kevin Silva</td>
<td>Jr.</td>
<td>DL</td>
<td>5-11</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>Hudson, NH/Alvirme</td>
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<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>Josh Duford</td>
<td>Sr.</td>
<td>WR</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>Claremont, NH/Stevens</td>
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<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>Zac Duval</td>
<td>Sr.</td>
<td>OL</td>
<td>6-4</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>Dover, NH/Dover</td>
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<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>Rob Methe</td>
<td>Fr.</td>
<td>LB</td>
<td>5-11</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>Medway, MA/Medway</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>John Militano</td>
<td>Jr.</td>
<td>OL</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>Concord, NH/Concord</td>
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<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Mike Ladd</td>
<td>Jr.</td>
<td>LB</td>
<td>6-1</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>Plymouth, NH/Plymouth Regional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Michael Malia</td>
<td>Fr.</td>
<td>LB</td>
<td>6-0</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>Watertown, CT/Watertown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Chris Corey</td>
<td>So.</td>
<td>RB</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>Hanover, MA/Abington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Dan Kelly</td>
<td>Jr.</td>
<td>DB</td>
<td>5-11</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>Londonderry, NH/Londonderry</td>
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<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Mike Vahey</td>
<td>Sr.</td>
<td>OL</td>
<td>6-0</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>Fremont, NH/Pinkerton Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Joe Perry</td>
<td>Jr.</td>
<td>RB</td>
<td>5-11</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>Sandwich, MA/Sandwich</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2009 PSU Football Roster

**Head Coach:** Paul Castonia (Trinity '86, 7th year)

**Assistant Coaches:**
- Devin Zeman (Assoc. Head Coach/Def. Coordinator/Def. Backs)
- Lou Deslogs (Offensive Backs)
- Tom Pabst (Offensive Line)
- Dan Fallon (Linebackers)
- John Milano (Defensive Line)
- Tyler Scudder (Receivers)
- Brandon Clough (Student Asst./Off.)
- Ryan Harrington (Student Asst./Def.)
- Jim McGuire (Student Asst./Tight Ends)

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Stats</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BRIAN CASTELLUCCI</td>
<td>LB</td>
<td>Derry, NH/Pinkerton</td>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>2006:</td>
<td>9 gms; 16 tackles, 1 TFL, 1 sack, 1 BrUp</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2007:</td>
<td>53 tackles (2nd on team), 3 TFL, 1 INT</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Junior WR</td>
<td>Abington, MA/Abington</td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>2008:</td>
<td>12 gms; 7 rec. (2nd on team), 126 yds., 18.0 avg., TD</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2007: 3 gms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LUKE DENIO</td>
<td>RB/LB</td>
<td>Rochester, NH/Spaulding</td>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>2008:</td>
<td>12 gms, 14 tackles, 0.5 TFL, 1 Fum.Rec.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Senior OL</td>
<td>Dover, NH/Dover</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>2008:</td>
<td>Started all 12 gms at right tackle; All-NEFC (1st Team)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2007: 10 gms as reserve right tackle</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2006: 6 gms as reserve right tackle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEVE CAMPBELL</td>
<td>DL</td>
<td>Northborough, MA/Algonquin</td>
<td>Public Management</td>
<td>2008:</td>
<td>12 gms; 50 tackles (4th on team), 2.5 TFL, 1 sack, 2 INT, 2 FF, 1 FR,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 BK; 39 att.; 345 yds., 8.8 avg., 8 TD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2007: 10 gms; 21 tackles, 2.5 TFL, 1 sack; 25 att., 97 yds., 3.9 avg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAI CULLING</td>
<td>RB/LB</td>
<td>Rochester, NH/Spaulding</td>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>2008:</td>
<td>12 gms, 14 tackles, 0.5 TFL, 1 Fum.Rec.</td>
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<tr>
<td>JAY BAIRD</td>
<td>FB</td>
<td>Worcester, MA/Holy Name</td>
<td>Criminal Justice</td>
<td>2008:</td>
<td>8 gms (2 starts), 31 att., 193 yds., 6.2 avg., 1 TD</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2007: 10 gms (4 starts), 53 att., 235 yds., 4.4 avg., 2 TD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.J. BROOKS</td>
<td>QB/WR</td>
<td>Seabrook, NH/Winnacunnet</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>2008:</td>
<td>12 gms; 18 rec.; 476 yds, 4 TD; 0-1 passing; 23 kick ret., 20.2 avg.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>2007: 10 gms; 4 rush, 16 yds; 1-1 passing, 17 yds, 17 kick ret., 20.6 avg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIKE BRUNING</td>
<td>LB</td>
<td>Abington, MA/Abington</td>
<td>Business Administration</td>
<td>2008:</td>
<td>12 gms; 29 tackles, 2.5 TFL, 1 sack, 1 FF</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>2007: 9 gms, 5 tackles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOHN CREAMER</td>
<td>RB/LB</td>
<td>Northborough, MA/Algonquin</td>
<td>Public Management</td>
<td>2008:</td>
<td>12 gms; 50 tackles (4th on team), 2.5 TFL, 1 sack, 2 INT, 2 FF, 1 FR,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 BK; 39 att.; 345 yds., 8.8 avg., 8 TD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2007: 10 gms; 21 tackles, 2.5 TFL, 1 sack; 25 att., 97 yds., 3.9 avg.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Follow Plymouth State University athletics online at athletics.plymouth.edu.
Drs. Daniel O’Neill and Dougald MacArthur, along with their partner Andrew Chen are delighted to announce the opening of their new office located in the Plymouth Commerce Park on Tenney Mt. Highway and Yeaton Road.

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KEY PANTHER RETURNEES

NICK FUCCILLO

Junior OL
East Falmouth, MA/Falmouth
Business Administration
2008: Started 10 of 12 gms at center
2007: 1 gm as reserve OL

MATT MACLEAN

Junior DL
Abington, MA/Abington
Criminal Justice
2008: Started 12 gms, 37 tackles, 6 TFL, 3 sacks, 3 BrUp
2007: 9 gms, 8 tackles, 0.5 sack, 1 BrUp

AARON GETZ

Junior DL/TE
Palmerton, PA/Palmerton Area
Physical Education
2008: 12 gms (4 starts); 1 rec., 46 yds.
2007: 10 gms; 3 rec., 97 yds., 32.3 avg.

ZACH PARSONS

Junior DB
Florence, MA/Northampton
Criminal Justice
2008: All-NEFC (2nd Team); Started 12 gms, 52 tackles (3rd on team), 4 INT (led team), 4 BrUp, 2 FR
2007: 10 gms, 20 tackles, 0.5 TFL, 3 BrUp

MATT VAHEY

Senior OL
Fremont, NH/Pinkerton Academy
Business Administration
2008: Started all 12 gms at left tackle
2007: Started all 10 gms at left tackle
2006: Played at Saint Anselm

AARON GETZ

Junior OL
Fremont, NH/Pinkerton Academy
Business Administration
2008: Started all 12 gms at left or right guard
2007: Started all 10 gms at left guard
2006: Played at Saint Anselm

KEVIN WHALEN

Junior CB
Wallingford, CT/Sheehan
Management
2008: ECAC All-Northeast; All-NEFC (1st Team); 48 tackles, 3 INT, 8 BrUps
2007: All-NEFC (2nd Team); 30 tackles, 1 TFL, 5 BrUps

DAN KELLY

Junior DB
Londonderry, NH/Londonderry
Management
2008: Started 12 gms; 44 tackles, 2.5 TFL, 2 INT, 8 BrUp
2007: 7 gms, 1 tackle, 1 INT

JIM SESTITO

Senior DL
Foxborough, MA/Foxborough
Management
2008: All-East Region (1st Team); ECAC All-Northeast; All-NEFC (1st Team); 41 tackles, 14.5 TFL (led team), 8.5 sacks (led team), 1 FF, 1 FR
2007: 10 gms; 14 tackles, 4.5 TFL, 1.5 sacks, 5 BrUp
2006: 9 gms; 7 tackles, 2 sacks

LEX SMITH

Senior WR
Walpole, MA/Walpole
Business Administration
2008: 12 gms (2 starts); 2 rec., 42 yds.
2007: 3 gms
2006: 2 gms

JIM SESTITO

Senior DL
Foxborough, MA/Foxborough
Management
2008: All-East Region (1st Team); ECAC All-Northeast; All-NEFC (1st Team); 41 tackles, 14.5 TFL (led team), 8.5 sacks (led team), 1 FF, 1 FR
2007: 10 gms; 14 tackles, 4.5 TFL, 1.5 sacks, 5 BrUp
2006: 9 gms; 7 tackles, 2 sacks
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