Ron English had a very good gig.

As defensive coordinator at Louisville, one of the top football programs in the Big East year after year, English was one of those names that always popped up when there a head football coaching position became available because of a firing or resignation. He had just joined the Louisville staff when Charlie Strong replaced Bobby Petrino at the helm if the Cardinals program after spending five seasons in Ann Arbor, where he was the secondary coach for four seasons and defensive coordinator for one.

A four-year letterwinner as a defensive back for the Cal Golden Bears, English had built an impressive resume after his playing days ended, on the staffs of San Diego State (secondary coach 1996-97) and Arizona State (secondary coach 1998-02).

When Jeff Ganyk was let go at Eastern Michigan, after compiling a 16-42 record in five seasons at the school, Eastern Michigan athletic director Derrick Gragg asked English to take over the football program in Ypsilanti. It seemed like a perfect fit…young, enthusiastic coach known for his ability to recruit heading to a program that had not had a winning season since it went 6-5 in 1995.

“I’m sure that this is the right choice at the right time,” Gragg said at the press conference announcing English’s hiring.

Hope springs eternal, but sooner or later reality sets in. English has yet to win his first football game as a head coach, going 0-12 in 2009 and dropping his first six contests this season. EMU currently holds the nation’s second-longest losing streak, 18 games, which is topped only by Western Kentucky’s 25 losses in a row.

The Eagles have quite a ways to go before the streak reaches historical proportions. EMU suffered through a 29-game winless streak that started on Oct. 14, 1959 with a 39-6 loss at Northern Michigan and ended with a 14-0 win over Eastern Illinois on Oct. 27, 1962. This streak, however, included a pair of tie games.

The longest pure losing streak in school history started on Sept. 20, 1980 with a 34-6 loss to Ohio and ended, 27 games later, with a 9-7 win over Kent State on Nov. 6, 1982.

When he accepted the position at EMU prior to the ’08 season English was not worried about the past. He had confidence that he was going to be able to change the mindset at Eastern, as well as get talented players to come there. Just minutes from the University of Michigan campus and with a much more successful MAC program less than 50 miles south in Toledo, Eastern Michigan isn’t in the greatest geographic position for recruiting. That didn’t matter to English, either.

“I realize the program hasn’t been as successful as others in recent years, but I look forward to changing the culture around here,” English said the day he was hired. “I think I can recruit, and I think I can get a staff here of good men that can teach. I think I’m undeterred. People ask me about (Eastern’s history of losing) and I couldn’t tell you about 30 years ago or 20 years ago or all that stuff. That doesn’t really matter.”

English scored big with his 2010 recruiting class, backing up his words about being able to recruit. The 23-player recruiting class included five junior college players and a lot of talent. Quarterback Tyler Benz (Park Ridge, Ill.) was rated in the top 50 players in Illinois after his first

team all-state selection. Tight end Doniel Gambrell (Cleveland, Ohio) came to Ypsilanti from Ted Ginn Sr.'s loaded Glenville program…a program that has been a pipeline for Jim Tressel's top-ranked Ohio State program. Linebacker Desdan Hester (Atlanta, Ga.) was ESPN's No. 2 ranked inside linebacker in the state of Georgia.

English also brought in Darius Moffett (Chicago, Ill.) who was the '09 Chicago Public School League defensive player of the year, speedster Donald Scott (Apopka, Fla.), who was an all-state athlete in track and Latarrius Thomas, a transfer from Louisville who was a freshman starter in 2006.

However, Eagles fans will not see the full effect of this solid recruiting class until next year at the earliest. Meanwhile Eastern Michigan has one of the tougher MAC schedules remaining. The Eagles travel to Ball State this weekend, head to Virginia for a date with the Cavaliers Oct. 23, host Toledo Oct. 30 and then have a week off. EMU finishes the season with trips to Western Michigan (Nov. 13) and Buffalo (Nov. 20) before closing the season at home against Northern Illinois (Nov. 26).

The home game against the Rockets is probably Eastern's best chance to snap the streak this season as Toledo has been a hot and cold team this year.

One positive from the Eagles' brutal early-season schedule is the fact that the university will rake in $1.8 million in guarantees this year…including the $850,000 it got for its trip to Columbus for a 73-20 drubbing at the hands of the Buckeyes.

Despite the losing streak and lopsided losses (a combined 156-53 score in three losses against non-conference Army, Ohio State and Vanderbilt), Gragg remains confident English is the right man to turn the EMU football program around.

"I'm 100 percent behind Ron English, and I've said that since Day 1," Gragg told *The Detroit News* after the loss to the Buckeyes. "He's fully committed…we talked briefly about the past game and going into the next game. Our board is very interested in us being competitive in the conference and that's what we plan on doing."