

## West Beats East In U.P. Football All-Star Game

MARQUETTE -- Many from the Western end of the Upper Peninsula felt their team would win the first U.P. Football All-Star Game in 57 years. But few expected the West would cruise to such a dominating 38-14 victory over the East on Saturday night in the Superior Dome.

"We were confident going in because we felt we had a great team," said Kingsford tackle Chris Carlson. "But we didn't expect this."

East head coach Jeff Olson of Ishpeming felt his team had run into a brick wall. "The West had talented, great athletes with a lot of speed," he said. "That is one heck of a team." The West featured 11 players from two state champion teams. (Menominee and Forest Park.).

West head coach Bill Santilli wanted his squad to enjoy All-Star Week, but strove for a Spartan mentality in his players. "We introduced the coaches to the kids and said, 'Let's start hitting,'" Santilli said. "I don't know if it's right, but it worked. We had great intensity in our practices all week."

Santilli also felt his players were successful because they bought into what his coaching staff was telling them. "We had a great bunch of kids," said Santilli. "The coaches had to switch positions on a number of players, but the kids did what was best for the team. We were very team-oriented. This whole group made for a very good mix"

The West scored early and often. After a booming 44-yard West punt, the East fumbled an attempted fair catch. The fumble recovery energized the West, and three plays later Menominee's Ethan Shaver scored on a 3-yard sweep.

The East went three-and-out three times in a row due to a stout, swarming West defense. "They are strong up the middle, so you can't run there, and they have speed, so you can't get outside," Olson said. "Then it's third and long, and they come after you when you pass. Very impressive."

Calumet's Nick Koskiniemi booted a 25-yard field goal with 1:10 left in the first quarter to give the West a 10-0 lead.

Midway through the second quarter, Calumet quarterback Emmett Bjorn hooked up with Ryan Peroceschi on an 11-yard fade pattern in the right corner of the end zone. Bjorn complete 12 of 15 passes and was named the West's Offensive MVP. The score and Koskiniemi's extra point gave the West a 17-0 lead.

The West finished off the first half scoring with Shaver split out wide and catching a perfectly lofted pass from Bjorn for a 15-yard TD score with 1:00 left. With the extra point, the West led 24-0 at halftime.

With a big lead entering the second half, Santilli seemed content to go with a grind-it-out, ball-control offense and pass only as needed. It paid off as West running back Marcus Dunbar of Wakefield-Marenisco scored on a 3-yard run up the middle with 10:05 left in the fourth quarter.

Kingsford's Josh Droese added another score for the West as he broke off left tackle for a 68-yard touchdown. It was the longest run of the game, and the extra point made it 38-0.

The East picked up a pair of late touchdowns in the fourth quarter when Casey Hares of Ishpeming and Pete Formolo of Sault Ste. Marie rushed for one yard scores.

NMU recruit Cody Kangas was the only potent offensive weapon for the East. The Manistique quarterback had 69 yards on the ground and 58 through the air, despite a heavy West pass rush.

The strong West defense was lead by Norway's Kyle Zweifel, who was all over the field with 13 tackles. Bessemer linebacker Pat Hampston and L'Anse strongman Matt Cowling finished with seven tackles each.

Most Valuable Player Awards on offense were Cody Kangas (East) and Bjorn (West).

On defense, the MVP's were Levi Jeezek of Negaunee (East) and Zweifel (West). Character Awards were presented to Jack Audette of North Dickinson from the East, and Shaver of the West squad.