



## U.P. FOOTBALL ALL-STAR GAME



### Day 4 (Thursday) Bay Cliff Health Camp

MARQUETTE, MI – Thursday afternoon the All-Star players and coaches travelled to Bay Cliff Health Camp, located in Big Bay. Bay Cliff is a summer camp for children ages 3-17, who have disabilities. The All-Stars took buses provided by Checker, and the excitement started the minute they arrived. Bay Cliff campers and counselors were present to welcome the team, and give tours of the campus.

After all the groups received a tour, the players took their turn as coaches when they split up into different stations and showed the Bay Cliff campers football drills and skills. The campers were very excited to be interacting in such a fun and personal way with the players. Seeing the uninhibited campers beaming with smiles as they played football with the All-Star players is something that words simply cannot describe.

They received handoffs from the quarterbacks and made their way through a tunnel of players to the “endzone”, where they practiced their celebration dances. Other groups showed the campers how to throw and catch or kickoff, while others held big pads and let the campers run up and “hit” or block them. No matter what the campers’ physical ability, the players worked with them so they were able to get the feel of what it is like to practice football.

In addition to the football drills, several All-Stars literally gave the jerseys off their backs to campers, so they could practice in an official football uniform. Several other campers walked around with notebooks getting as many autographs as possible from All-Star players. It was quite a thrill for everyone involved.

After the football portion was complete, the Bay Cliff campers invited the players to join them for dinner, which gave the players a glimpse into the routine of meal time. It seems that sometimes big strong high school football players should be eating out of troughs, so it was good for them to be exposed to proper manners by the campers. Some of the “Big

House” rules included: waiting for the dinner bell to enter the hall, no hats indoors, saying please and thank you, passing food to the right, no elbows on the table and no talking with your mouth full. Anytime a player was observed breaking any of these rules, there was a camper close by informing them of the proper way they should be conducting themselves.

Needless to say, the trip was a huge success. As much as the campers enjoyed the visit, the players took away much more. A theme of All-Star week has always been to give back to the communities of the U.P., and the players saw first-hand at Bay Cliff what that means. As one of the All-Star coaches stated, many things will come and go from our lives, but memories will last forever, and there were definitely many unbelievable memories made this year at Bay Cliff.

There is only one more day of practice left before the two teams take to the field on Saturday. Both teams have come quite a long way since the beginning of the week and are looking like teams who have played together for an entire season. The players have embraced each other as teammates and it shows in their chemistry on the field. Saturday should be a very exciting match-up.

Friday evening is the All-Star Banquet, which will provide the players a chance to see their families and tell them all about how the week has gone. It is being held at the NMU University Center, and the guest speaker is Eric Beverly, former NFL veteran of the Lions and Falcons.

Saturday morning is the underclassman Combine, which starts at 9AM in the Dome. Any players in grades 9-12 may attend. Registration may be performed at the door and the cost is \$45. All Combine participants will also receive a tshirt and free attendance to the U.P. Football All-Star Game.

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