

The Mining Journal
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Marquette, MI 49855
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www.miningjournal.net

Rivals No More

MARQUETTE - The rivalry between the Ishpeming Hematites and Manistique Emeralds will still rage on when the 2009 Upper Peninsula football season begins next fall.

But this Saturday at the U.P. Football All-Star Game in the Superior Dome, four Hematites and four Emeralds will put aside the bad blood for a chance to avenge last year's 38-14 loss to the West team.

Ishpeming's Brad Waters, Matt Waters, Jon Schinella and Jake Dault, along with Manistique's Terry Martin, Josh Mickelson, Garde Kangas and Dustin Demers will all don the white jerseys of the East team and take the field together.

"They're all big, and they're skilled," Kangas said of teaming up with the Ishpeming players. "We had a tough time against them this year in football, so it's a good thing to have them on our team this time."

For linemen like Schinella, Matt Waters and Martin, the game will also provide some relief from four years of battling against each other in the trenches.

"I know one thing, when we played Manistique I hated having to play against Terry (Martin), and playing right next to him on the line is probably one of the things I'm looking forward to most for this game," Matt Waters said. "Having a kid like that playing next to me, it makes me feel good that I've got my back covered. And the caliber (of players on the West team) that we're playing against, with the kids who are the best in the U.P., I feel comfortable that he's got my back and I've got his."

The feeling was mutual for Martin.

"Playing against each other, it's a hard time. He's (Matt Waters) one of the best linemen the MPC (Mid-Peninsula Conference) has ever seen, and we have a lot of fun out on the field against each other, but it's going to be a lot more fun playing right next to him," Martin said. "I know what he can do. I've felt that before."

But the rivalry hasn't all been forgotten during the preparation for Saturday's game. The Emerald players still remember when Brad Waters made a last second interception in the 2007 playoffs at Manistique, sealing a 36-30 win for the Hematites, and according to the Ishpeming defensive back, probably changing Manistique's opinion of him.

"I probably wasn't well liked by them coming in to this week," Brad Waters said.

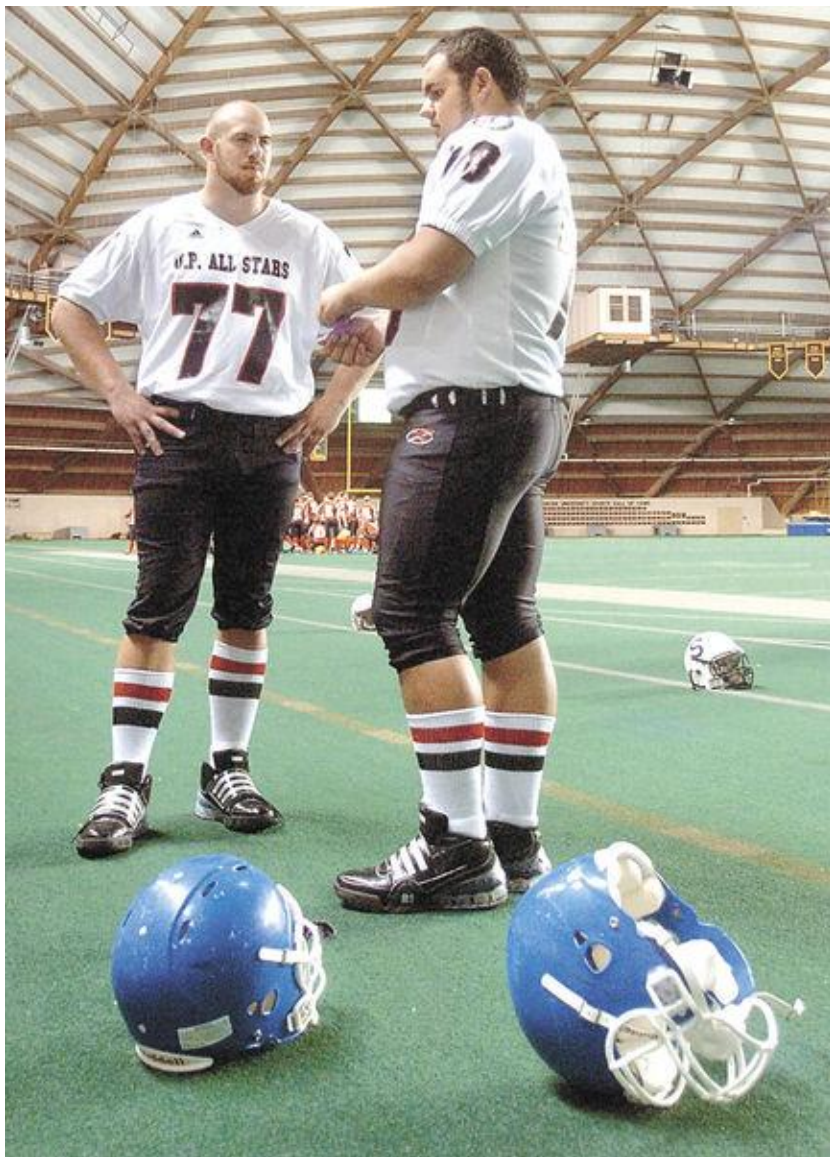
During a defensive back drill this week, East team assistant coach Ed Marietti, a member of the Emeralds coaching staff, watched as Brad Waters came down with the ball on a tip drill.

Demers looked to Marietti and said, "Does that look familiar?"

"But the past is the past now, I guess," Demers said Tuesday at Media Day. "We're seniors, we graduated, and it's time to get rid of those grudges because we're on the same team now."

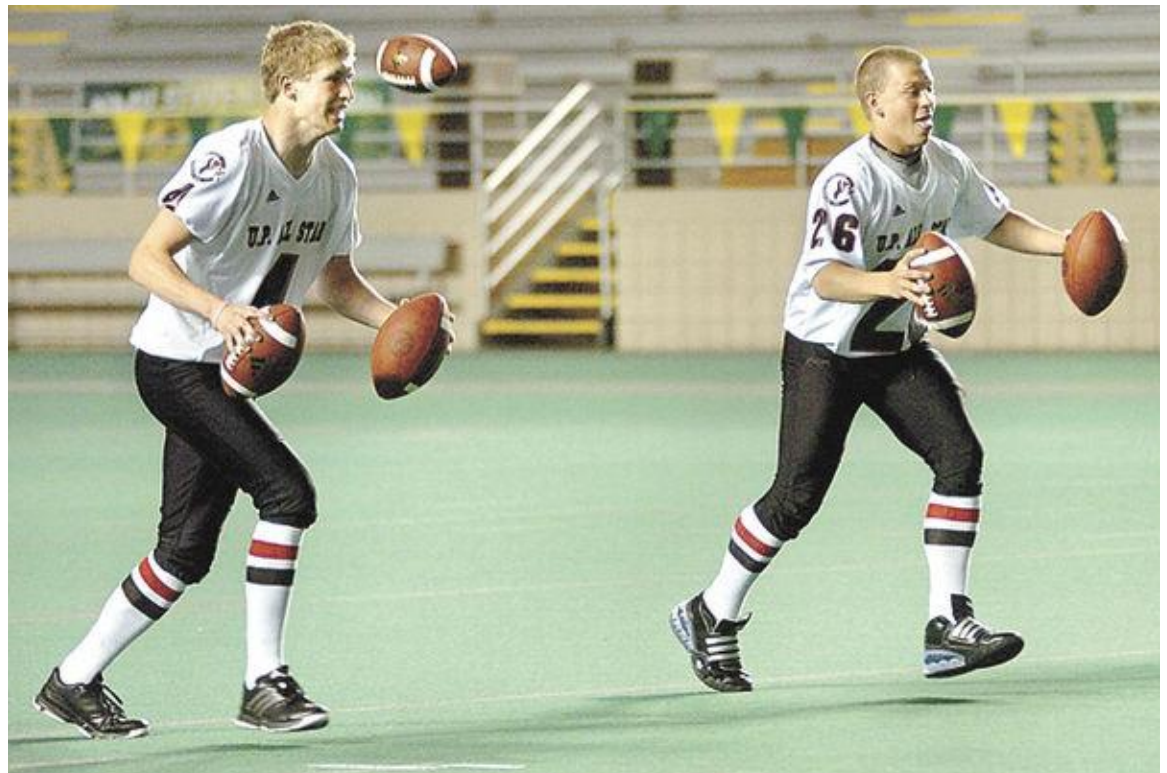
For both the Hematite and Emerald players involved, the week of events has been enjoyable thus far, getting to meet new people and start new friendships, but there's still one thing left to do that would make the week a real success.

"If we can win Saturday," Brad Waters said, "that'd top off a great week."



Manistique High School's Terry Martin, 77, chats with Ishpeming High School's Brad Waters during the U.P. Football All-Star media night Tuesday at the Superior Dome. Martin and Waters will be teammates Saturday during the U.P. All-Star game.

(Marquette Mining Journal photo by Julia Woehrer)



Manistique High School's Garde Kangas, left, and St. Ignace High School's Rob Robinson joke around during the U.P. Football All-Star media night Tuesday at the Superior Dome. Kangas and Robinson will be playing on the East Team in Saturday's game.

(Marquette Mining Journal photo by Julia Woehrer)