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Smock Makes Return To Football Field During U.P. All-Star Game Week

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MARQUETTE — Kyle Smock is a football all-star that didn't play a single down this season. The St. Ignace fullback put on pads this week for the first time in 18 months practicing for the U.P. All-Star Football Game on Saturday despite sitting out the season with a knee injury.

"It was tough the first couple of pops," Smock said. "But once the headache went away, it was OK."

Smock injured his anterior cruciate ligament last July, putting him out for not only football season but basketball season, too.

An all-Straits Area Conference selection his junior year and the Saints' leading rusher, he was almost a shoo-in to make All-U.P. and earn a spot on the team on the field.

"He would have been one of the premier backs in the U.P.," said Saints coach Marty Spencer, who is working with the East coaching staff at the all-star game. "It was his time to break out."

The all-star selection committee, led by Todd Goldbeck, owner of Xcel Sports Training and the organizer of the U.P. All-Star Football Game, looks at All-U.P. football teams and all-conference selections to determine the participants of the game, but also solicits information from coaches.

"It's nice of Todd and the organization to give Kyle the chance to play," Spencer said. Smock had knee surgery in October and was able to participate in track and field for the Saints, running the 400-meter dash. He plans on playing football at Grand Rapids Community College this season, possibly at safety.

This week he is spending time at tailback. He is one of 17 local players participating in the game.

Saints teammates Tyler Oja and Rob Robinson are playing, while Andy Tamlyn is in Marquette but will not play due to injury. Cedarville's Andrew Figures, Jordan Huff, Luke Murray, C.J. Paquin and Josh Wilson; Sault High's Chad Anderson, Derek Horde, Caleb Vizina and Tyler Wollan; Rudyard's Todd Anderson and Aaron Diepenhorst; Pickford's Mickael Cantin, Engadine's Killian Frisch and Newberry's Derek Dake will be participating.

"It rubs off when everybody's going at 100 percent," Smock said. "It makes you want to work harder."



Kyle Smock, who missed all of his senior football season at St. Ignace with a knee injury, is competing in the U.P. All-Star football game in Marquette.