

Jensen Leads East Stars To Win In U.P. All-Star Football Game

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MARQUETTE – Caleb Vizina remembers the first game of the 2008 regular season. The Sault High lineman was helpless as Kyle Jensen weaved in and out through the Sault High defense.

Saturday at the Superior Dome, Vizina was helping give Jensen holes to cut through. Jensen was named the East MVP as the East won the U.P. All-Star Football Game 21-6.

“It’s always fun when it’s not happening to you,” Vizina said.

Jensen finished with 92 yards rushing, including a 47-yard touchdown run in the first quarter, and 29 yards and a touchdown on 2-of-3 passing.

Vizina, playing left guard, was surrounded by plenty of talent on the line. On his left was Gladstone’s Josh Hadel, who is going to Western Michigan on a football scholarship. To his right were Rudyard’s Aaron Diepenhorst and Todd Anderson, and Manistique’s Terry Martin, who holds two U.P. discus records.

“Jensen is a great player,” Vizina said. “It’s nice to play with someone who can cut like that.”

But the line was just as big on the other side of the line, making for a defense-dominated game, much different than last year’s passing-dominated game – owing much to the run-first philosophies of East coach Paul Jacobson of Negaunee and West coach Scott Boddy of Iron Mountain, but the running-quarterback game that many of the top Upper Peninsula teams used this season.

“There’s not anyone who doesn’t know exactly what he’s doing 100 percent of the time,” Vizina said.

Sault High’s Tyler Wollan intercepted two passes in the second half to help preserve the East’s win.

“It was a great way to top off a career,” said Wollan, who had four interceptions in the regular season. “It’s awesome, just playing with the best of the best.”

Wollan, who played most of the game at cornerback, never got burned by West’s speedy receivers.

“We’ve been practicing with the fastest player in the U.P.,” said Wollan, referring to Paquin, who won the 40-yard-dash challenge this week. “It is nice to practice against that kind of speed.”

After Jensen's 47-yard run in the first quarter, the West answered with a hook-and-ladder play from Lake Linden-Hubbell quarterback Logan Chadde to Baraga's Tyler McGaha, who pitched to Norway's Jake Meneghini for the easy score. West's extra point hit the goalpost and missed.

East scored on its first drive of the third quarter, a 22-yard strike on third-and-goal from Jensen to Menominee's Justin Salzman.

Manistique's Josh Mickelson hit teammate Garde Kangas from 54 yards out in the fourth quarter to wrap up the scoring.

Cedarville's Andrew Figures kicked all three extra points.

Eastern U.P. players were quiet on offense. St. Ignace's Kyle Smock, playing in his first competitive game since November 2007, had 22 yards on five carries. Sault High's Derek Horde had three carries for 10 yards. Cedarville's C.J. Paquin, who lined up at both quarterback and wide receiver, had four carries for minus-3 yards. Paquin was 1-of-2 passing for 12 yards.

St. Ignace's Rob Robinson had four carries for five yards, but his impact was on special teams. He opened up the second half with a hard tackle on the kickoff return and earned a 5-yard facemask penalty that he and his teammates disagreed with. He had another big hit on a punt return later in the quarter, this one clean.

"I flew down pretty fast," Robinson said. "I clotheslined the kid. The refs said I grabbed the facemask, but I didn't. I had a blast the whole week."

Manistique's Dustin Demers was named East's Defensive MVP with 10 tackles. Salzman was given the Character Award for the East.

Iron Mountain's Pat Flood was the West's Offensive MVP. He had 11 carries for 46 yards and 6-for-15 passing with 61 yards and one interception. Iron Mountain's Tim Obradovich was West's Defensive MVP, and Forest Park's Jim Wheeler received the Character Award.