

Soo Evening News  
Tuesday, June 24, 2008

U.P. Football All-Stars begin practices for Saturday's game

MARQUETTE - Day 1 of the Upper Peninsula Football All-Star week is in the books.

All of the players checked in and each team got to practice twice on Monday. The East practiced inside Monday afternoon and night, while the West was outside for both practices.

According to observers, it is hard to tell which team has an advantage, but they are definitely using two different philosophies.

The East team performed many drills and partial sets, but didn't have much one-on-one contact or hitting. Day 1 concluded for the East with a giant game of scatterball in the Dome.

Fourteen Eastern Upper Peninsula players are expected to play on the East team. The Sault High Blue Devils have the most players on the East team's roster, which include defensive ends Zach Anderson and Nick Cushman, running back Pete Formolo, defensive lineman Nate Moran and kicker J.P. Theriault.

The Pickford Panthers are represented by defensive back Richard Gibson and linemen Joe Jenkins and Jordan Potter. St. Ignace players include lineman Derek Marshall and tight end James Peterson.

Other East players expected to participate include Rudyard running back Pete Lawlor, linebacker Sheldon Tassier of Cedarville and Engadine defensive lineman John Troyer.

The West practice resembled the first week of any practice, with all of the players eager to show each other who was better and who could hit the hardest. They were holding nothing back and the adrenaline was high. Each team appears to know its strengths, and are playing to them.

Time will tell which strategy will suit each team best, but after 57 years of no U.P. Football All-Star Game, it is safe to say that the game has not lost any luster while sitting on the shelf for that long. Energy is high and there is electricity in the air surrounding every player and coach.

Tonight will serve as Media Day at the Dome, from 7-9 p.m. Players will get their individual and team pictures taken. ESPN Radio will also be doing a live broadcast from the Dome.