

Players Enjoy Skills Challenge

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By BILL HARRIS Journal Sports Editor

MARQUETTE -With today being the last day before tomorrow's U.P. Football All-Star Game, players and coaches will get a bit of a break after their last practices.

The All-Star players -who were brought to the game by invitation from all over the Upper Peninsula - will get a breather following their final practice as they will attend the All-Star banquet at the University Center at 6 p.m. tonight.

The last event for all the players before the game, the banquet will be used to recognize players and their achievements.

The announcement of which two Upper Peninsula schools are to receive donations from the game's proceeds will also be announced tonight.

Saturday before the game, there will be an underclassmen combine for players to assess and showcase their skills. The results will be sent to colleges as a recruiting tool.

The highlight of the week so far may have been Wednesday's skill challenge. Events included a 40-yard dash fastest man competition, a strongest man bench press as well as the quarterback, receiver, punting and field goal kicking challenges.

According to Todd Goldbeck, owner and president of Xcel Sports Training, the players were split into lineman and non-lineman for three of the events.

"Having two divisions gives those challenges a unique atmosphere, as there are several competitions taking place within each event," he said.

The three events split up were fastest man, strongest man and the receiver challenge.

Results for the players challenge are as follows:

Fastest Man: Mike Schmaus, Ontonagon, 40 Yard Dash: 4.511 seconds (electronic timed)

Fastest Man (Lineman): Ben Gable, Rudyard, 40 Yard Dash: 4.684 seconds (electronic timed)

Strongest Man: Aaron Skrenes, Westwood, Bench Press: 225 pounds, 19 repetitions

Strongest Man (Non-Lineman): Justin Heupel, Kingsford, Bench Press: 225 pounds, 10 repetitions

Quarterback Challenge: Geritt Mortensen, St. Ignace, Distance Thrown: 57 yards

Receiver Challenge: Brady Grayvold, Norway

Receiver Challenge (Lineman): Andy Hartwig, Iron Mountain

Punting: Geritt Mortensen, St. Ignace, 57 yards in the air

Field Goal Kicking: Mike Klobucher, Engadine, 49 yards

While the players were competing, the coaches had a friendly competition of their own. They went to the Marquette Golf Club's Heritage course and played a round of golf.

The East coaches (Todd Kangas -Manistique, Ed Marietti - Manistique, Joe Derouin -Bark River-Harris, Don Ives -Bark River-Harris and Josh Rader - Pickford) won the scramble.