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West Sets Pace In All-Star Skills Tests

Football All-Stars Enjoy an Afternoon Off

MARQUETTE - The West Team showed the East it will not be easily defeated when the duo meet this Saturday for the first Upper Peninsula Football All-Star Game in 57 years.

In a lightly competitive atmosphere Wednesday afternoon at the overcooked Superior Dome, team members from the U.P.'s West End won all six skills competitions held.

But fun was the key word of the day.

"It's been fun," said Manistique quarterback Cody Kangas, who is headed to Northern Michigan University to play football this fall. "You get the lineman doing the wide receiver drills, you get the lineman throwing. It's fun just to see everybody do everything.

"It's always fun to see lineman doing the 40 (yard dash)."

One of those lineman testing his speed was Ishpeming's Pat Beyer.

"I'm a little sore," he said. "I ran it three times, but I feel like I ran it 12 times."

The day was a real test of the players' abilities, the 5-foot-11, 240-pound Beyer said.

"We all haven't been in football since last November at the latest. So we're all pretty beat up right now."

Marquette's Kevin Nancarrow agreed with that assessment, as the 86 players who are set to play in Saturday's game have been doing two-a-day practices in preparation.

"We just went this morning, and now we're having this (skills competition)," said Nancarrow, who will take his game to Michigan Tech this fall. "Everybody's pretty sore, but it's good to get some fun stuff in. It's football, but it's not practice."

The winners of the competitions were not great of surprises.

Matt Cowling of L'Anse, who is bound for Michigan Tech, was crowned the strongest man for lifting 225 pounds for 23 repetitions.

Calumet's Nick Koskiniemi won the kicking contest with a 51-yard field goal.

Division 5 State Champion Menominee's Ethan Shaver ran 40 yards in 4.526 seconds on the turf (electronic time).

Norway's Kyle Zweifel took the receiver challenge with 32 catches of 32 balls thrown.

Division 8 State Champion Forest Park's Kyle Roberts threw the football 57 yards.

Fellow Trojan Calix Sholander had the furthest punt with a 50 yarder.

The all-star game is set for 3 p.m. Saturday at the Superior Dome. Tickets cost \$5 at the door.



Manistique's Cody Kangas, left, throws the football to Marquette's Kevin Nancarrow during the Receivers Challenge at the Superior Dome on Wednesday. The skills competition was a lighthearted break from two-a-day practices leading up to Saturday's U.P. Football All-Star Game.

(Journal photo by Kurt Mensching)