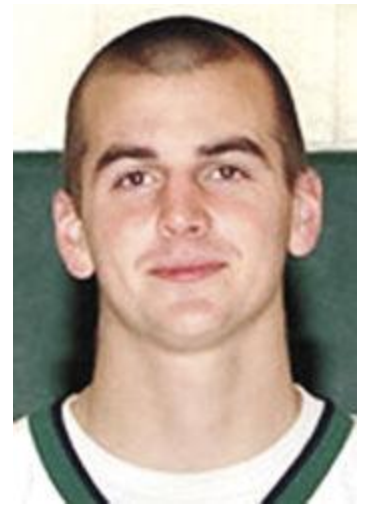


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Mickelson Enjoys All-Star Summer

ESCANABA - Josh Mickelson is making a habit of playing in all-star games.

The Manistique High School standout plays in the U.P. All-Star Classic basketball game today at Escanaba, a week after playing the football game in Marquette.

"It was so much fun, playing with the best kids in the U.P.," Mickelson said of the football game. "The whole camaraderie of the game. The East side took it personal about last year's game (when the West won)."

The East gridgers won 21-6, with Mickelson splitting time at quarterback with MVP Kyle Jensen of Gladstone and CJ Paquin of Cedarville.

Paquin, the Associated Press Class D Player of the Year in Michigan this season, will also be playing today, but he will play for the North. Mickelson will be on the South.

Both teams have solid players, with Mickelson's squad of 14 coming primarily within 50 miles of Escanaba.

Jared Turan of Manistique will join Mickelson along with Jace Daniels and Zach Hamilton of Escanaba, Andy Lauscher of Gladstone, Andy Augustine of Rapid River, Levi LaTulip of Big Bay de Noc, Travis Depuydt of Mid Peninsula, Tom King of Bark River-Harris, Charles Marsicek of North Central and Jason Dionne of Carney-Nadeau in addition to Brett Beland and Tyler Eland of Menominee.

Paquin, who will play basketball at Northern Michigan University, will be one of four future college players on the North team. Erik Powers (Minnesota-Duluth) and Joe Simon and Tyler Geary (Lake Superior State) of Marquette also headline the favored North.

Geary, however, will not play. He had surgery recently to repair a damaged thumb on his right hand. It was previously reported he had knee surgery.

Making the all-star game "is a big honor," said Mickelson. "You put in a lot of work and it is starting to pay off. To get to play with the best kids in both sports is pretty cool."

He said last week's experience will be beneficial today. "The competition level is going to be up a lot. It will be a higher level. You definitely have to pick up your game."

Mickelson figures the two teams "are pretty even" for today's 3 p.m. game and expects a run-and-shoot approach. "I'm not expecting them to set up a lot of plays, it will be open-gym play with simple plays."

Mickelson will play basketball at St. Norbert College. He was an All-U.P. Class A-B-C first-team selection this season after averaging 17.1 points, 6.8 rebounds and 3.9 assists. He scored 1,194 points in his career, which ended with a Class C quarterfinal loss to McBain.

Four other cagers also played in last week's football all-star game, Travis Depuydt of Mid Peninsula, Pat Flood of Iron Mountain, Mickael Cantin of Pickford and Tyler McGaha of Baraga.

Today's festivities begin at 9 a.m. with a brunch that is open to the public. A variety of skills contests start at 11 a.m., with the girls participating in free throw and 3-point shooting and the boys in 3-point shooting and slam dunk.