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Santilli A Hit With West Stars

IRON MOUNTAIN - Didn't take long for Forest Park Coach Bill Santilli to win over L'Anse standout lineman Matt Cowling at the U.P. Football All-Star Game.

"Playing for Santilli, any day, I would say we're going to come out and win," Cowling said after the West dominated the East 38-14 in the first U.P. all-star football game in 57 years. "That guy is awesome. I have so much respect for him as a coach.

"All these coaches were just working us so hard all week."

Santilli, along with his Trojans assistant Dave Graff, joined Iron Mountain head coach Scott Boddy and others in guiding the West.

"We introduced the coaches to the kids and said, 'Let's start hitting,'" Santilli said. "I don't know if it's right, but it worked.

"We had great intensity in our practices all week."

West built a 38-0 lead before the East scored twice in the fourth quarter. West stars responded to the coaching and whatever task assigned

"Coach Graff did what he does best," Santilli said. "He took eight linebackers and narrowed them down to four, and put them on the defensive side where they were going to be the best fit. I think by the defensive showing today, he did a great job."

While Menominee's Ethan Shaver and Kingsford's Josh Droese stood out offensively, Santilli found out in practice that Kingsford's Chris Carlson would be an anchor on the defensive line along with Cowling and Cody Woods of Menominee.

"Those three guys, we couldn't move them all week," Santilli said. "So we said, there's our big guys up front."

Carlson was confident prior to the game.

"We felt we had a great team," Carlson said. "But we didn't expect this."

(The Mining Gazette, The Mining Journal and The Daily Globe of Ironwood contributed to this story)