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East edges West in All-Star football contest

Athletes from Brooklyn, Independence, Parma compete in 41st Annual East-West Game

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BEREA - When fans think of thrilling sporting events, they don't typically think of all-star games.

Well, any fan who attended the 41st Annual East-West High School All-Star Scholarship Football Game at Baldwin Wallace June 14 surely got their money's worth as players from schools across Cuyahoga County put on a show right down to the end.

After the way the game started, it didn't seem as if fans were in for a nail-biter.

The West got out to an early 14-0 lead at the completion of the first quarter.

West quarterback **Travis Tarnowski** (North Royalton) punched in the team's first score of the game with a one yard run.

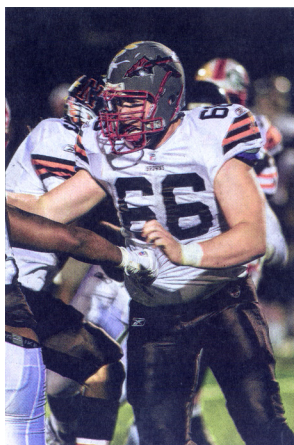
With only 48 seconds to play in the first quarter, Tarnowski found **Chris Ranc** (Lutheran West) in the endzone for the West's first touchdown completion. Kicker **Greg Raimondo** (Normandy) tacked on the extra point after both West scores.

The East wasted no time in the second frame as **Devonte Price** (Shaw) caught a 25-yard touchdown strike from Pope to put the East on the board less than one minute into the quarter. The extra point by Katz was good to cut the West's lead in half at 14-7.

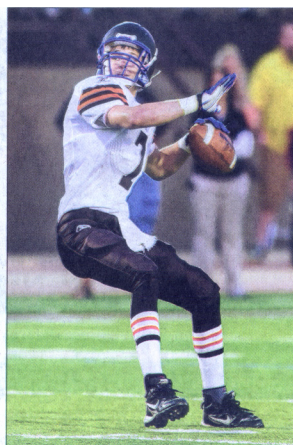
A few plays later saw the East get its second score on a bizarre miscue by the West.

Katz's punt was fumbled and then booted into the West's endzone where **Herb Walker** (Glenville) dove on it for a touchdown to tie the game at 14-14.

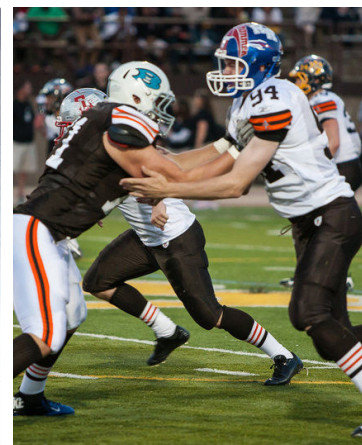
The East got a couple more somewhat unorthodox points a little more than a



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minute later when the West players, once again, found the ball in their possession and headed the wrong way toward their own endzone. The East recorded a safety to take the lead at 16-14.

It only got stranger as both team's secondary players put on a mini-showcase of their leaping abilities.

Grant Cunningham (Brecksville-Broadview Heights) picked off a pass by Pope to give the West possession, only to have it taken away again on an interception by the East's **Brionne Duke** (Chanel) shortly after. **Tom Rodriguez** (North Olmsted) turned flipped the script again when he picked off the second pass of the quarter for the West.

The West did not capitalize on Rodriguez's pick and soon wished they had.

With only 47 seconds left in the first half, Pope took the plunge into the endzone, much the way Tarnowski did earlier in the game, to extend the East's lead to 23-14.

The West made the most of the little time they had before halftime. They answered the East's score with a 36-yard touchdown pass to **Jovan Smiley** (Holy Name) courtesy of quarterback **Douglas Verbosky** (Midpark).

"I was telling the coach I want them throw me the ball all day," Smiley said after the game. "I told him if you throw it to my side of the field, I'm definitely going to get into that endzone."

For Verbosky, getting to throw one last touchdown on the field his team called home throughout his high school career was very special.

"Midpark began with a Doug as a quarterback and now we end with a Doug as a quarterback," he said, referring to Doug Oberg who played for the Meteors from 1960-64 before graduating in 1965.

At halftime, the East held a slight 23-21 advantage over the West.

The West's momentum from the end of the half carried over into the third quarter.

A 33-yard touchdown pass to **Nick Krempasky** (North Royalton) delivered by quarterback **Alex Sommers** (Brooklyn) gave the West back the lead at 28-23. That was it for the scoring on both sides in the third.

In the fourth quarter, the East recaptured the lead on a one-yard touchdown run by Walker, his second touchdown of the game.

The East's lead stood until Tarnowski found **Marquis Maines** (John Marshall) with a 10-yard strike for a touchdown with 1:58 left in the game.

With only 19 seconds remaining, quarterback **Jimmie Pope** (Shaker Heights) found **Ben Vandertill** (Chagrin Falls) in the endzone to give the East team a 37-34 lead.

The extra point by **Leo Katz** (Shaker Heights) was good and the East's then four-point lead over the West ended up being good for the victory.

Vandertill summed up his feelings about the experience shortly after the game, still savoring the moment after having just scored the winning touchdown for the East.

"It was an absolute blast, every second of it, coming into practice two weeks ago to see a bunch of guys that you don't really know but you've played against them, some rivals some friends," Vandertill said. "Nothing brings people together like team sports, especially football. It's rough. You get banged up and its hard work but it brought us together over the past two weeks and I think that's something I enjoyed most about this experience, the bonds and the friendships that I've made with these guys on the team.

"It's one thing celebrating a big play or a big win but its especially great celebrating with guys who you have that brotherhood with," he said.

When all was said and done, Pope completed 11-17 passes for 118 yards in the game with two touchdowns, two interceptions and no sacks. Pope received MVP honors for the East.

Deon Carter (Bedford) completed 1-4 passes for 37 yards for the East with an interception and he was sacked twice.

Tarnowski completed 10-14 passes for 126 yards, a pair of touchdowns, no interceptions and three sacks.

He said after the game that he enjoyed having the opportunity to put on the pads one more time for his high school and expressed appreciation for the coaches who contributed their time to help make the game happen, including North Royalton's **Roel Seballos**.

"It was just great to get coached by him one last time," Tarnowski said about Seballos.

"He's been a big influence on my life. I also loved the fact that we got to practice on my home field for two weeks more than I would have gotten to otherwise. It's something I'll definitely always remember."

Verbosky completed 5-7 passes for 76 yards, one touchdown and one interception.

Krempasky led the West in receiving with five catches for 90 yards and one touchdown earning him the MVP award for the West.

Smiley was second in receiving yardage for the West with 48 and **Dwayne Aaron** (St. Edward) was close behind with 46. Aaron also rushed seven times for 20 yards and netted 64 kick return yards in the game.

Price led the East in receiving with four catches for 95 yards. He also racked up 40 kick return yards.

Raimondo punted for a whopping 209 yards during the contest while his counterpart on the East team, Katz, punted for 146 yards.

One of Raimondo's punts was returned 56 yards by **Tony Andrews** (Brush).

The East team also included **Derrick Burgess** (Shaker Heights), **Richard Mitchell** (Glenville), **Harry Durrah** (Brush), **Donel Clayton** (Bedford), **Robert Harden** (Maple Heights), **Daiwan Woodley** (John Hay), **Austin Woodall** (Lutheran East), **Trayvon Williams** (John F. Kennedy), **Linden Stephens** (Euclid), **Benoit Mepango** (Gilmour), **George Berry** (Solon), **Tevan Ray** (John Adams), **Tommy Murtaugh** (Chagrin Falls), **Terrence Roscoe** (Euclid), **Myles Alexander** (Euclid), **Matthew Saunders** (Trinity), **Ta Shawn Chavis** (Orange), **Curtis Black** (University School), **Nick Chmielewski** (Shaker Heights), **Sylvester Bailly** (Richmond Heights), **Darrell Benjamin** (Glenville), **Jalen Funchess** (Benedictine), **Rob Goldberg** (Beachwood), **Peter Cvijanovic** (Benedictine), **Kyle Allamby** (Cleveland Heights), **Marvin Simmons** (Shaw), **Matt Blaha** (Euclid), **Devin Williams** (Maple Heights), **Tony Oliver** (John F. Kennedy), **Brandon Rotsky** (Beachwood) and **Bobby Upshaw** (Cleveland Heights). **Chad Sonkin** (Orange) and **Richard Johnson** (John Hay) were on hand as reserves.

Other West players included **Michael Gib** (Olmsted Falls), **Michael LaManna** (St. Ignatius), **Tyrone Williams** (Cleveland

Central Catholic), **Carey Artrip** (Independence), **Michael Dickey** (Rocky River), **Marquise Tyus** (Lakewood), **Brandon Friedrich** (Olmsted Falls), **Corey Schmidt** (Fairview), **Tre Smith** (Holy Name), **Daniel Medvetz** (Berea), **Nate Bryk** (Cuyahoga Heights), **Tyler Skoczen** (Independence), **Gary Brodek** (Valley Forge), **Robert Osborn** (Rocky River), **Christian Sifford** (Brecksville-Broadview Heights), **Lavonte Robinson** (St. Edward), **Eric Modie** (North Royalton), **Kameron Bremer** (Lutheran West), **Michael Cray** (St. Ignatius), **Matt Murphy** (Parma), **Jonathan Smith** (Midpark), **Sean Keller** (North Olmsted), **Ricky Dill** (Lakewood), **Tony Kapferer** (Strongsville), **Scott Rapps** (Bay Village), **Jimmy Duman** (Padua), **Dirrick Jones** (Cleveland Central Catholic) and **Josh Cox** (Berea).

Coaches for the East included Head Coach **Michael Brand** (defensive coordinator at John Hay) and assistants **Vito Federici** (John Hay), **Maurice Goodwin** (Maple Heights), **Mark Johnson** (Glenville), **Micah Parker** (John Hay) and **Ernest Priester** (John Hay).

Coaches for the West included Head Coach **Jamie Vanek** (Valley Forge) plus assistants **Rick Adams** (Rocky River), **Sean Baker** (Olmsted Falls), **Guy Boulton** (Valley Forge), **Joe Porach** (Valley Forge), **Seballos**, **Jason Simonetti** (Parma) and **Kevin Yurik** (Valley Forge). **Mark Raiff** was an honorary West coach. He is the chief academic officer for Independence and Olentangy Local Schools.

All uniforms for the game were donated by the Cleveland Browns and players got to keep them at the conclusion of the game. Medical services were provided courtesy of Cleveland Clinic Sports Health.

The halftime show featured the Adapted Football League players and coaches, sponsored by the Achievement Centers for Children and the Cleveland Browns.