

THE PLAIN DEALER

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Players in the 43rd East-West All-Star game will wear Cleveland Browns jerseys and pants donated by the Browns. (Photo courtesy chagrinvallyphotography.com)

Scouting the 43rd Cuyahoga County East-West All-Star high school football game

By Joe Noga,
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CLEVELAND, Ohio -- Here is a look at the 43rd Cuyahoga County East-West All-Star high school football game conducted by the Greater Cleveland Football Coaches Association.

What: 43rd annual Cuyahoga County East-West All-Star high school scholarship football game.

When: Friday at 7 p.m.

Where: Baldwin Wallace University, Finnie Stadium, 141 East Bagley Road, Berea.

Tickets: \$7 at the gate (children under 5 admitted free).

East head coach: Pete Zappas (former University School assistant).

West head coach: Patrick Patton (Holy Name assistant).

Notable: Both teams will wear uniforms donated by the Cleveland Browns for the seventh consecutive season. The West will wear white jerseys and the East will wear brown jerseys. The players get to keep their jerseys. . . . Proceeds benefit the Scholarship Fund of the Greater Cleveland Football Coaches

Association. . . . Honorary coach for the game is longtime University School assistant Tony Iliano.

Series: The East has won three consecutive games and leads overall, 22-19-1. Last year the East scored touchdowns on two straight plays in the fourth quarter — a 44-yard reception by Julio Stevens (Beachwood), and a 22-yard interception return by Craig Sloan (Garfield Heights) — then held on to defeat the West, 14-7.

What to watch:

East – Look for the law firm of Balazas and Borgman to get things moving

on offense for the East. Beachwood quarterback Max Balazas passed for 1,412 yards and 15 touchdowns for the Bison, while Stephen Borgman of Orange completed 61 percent of his passes for 2,094 yards and 24 TD. They will have a big (6-foot-4) target in Brush TE Moses Marshall to throw to near the end zone. And if they need to go deep, John Adams WR Jordan Leverette has state track qualifying speed. The East might be a little small on the offensive line, but Solon OG Joe Rinicella is a first team All-Northeast Ohio Conference performer who gives ▶

them some punch. Defensively, Garfield Heights LB Anthony Kastelic had 101 tackles, including 26 for loss, and 10 sacks for the Bulldogs. He was named All-NOC Lake Division Defensive Player of the Year. In the defensive backfield, Bedford's Anthony Copeland is a big 6-2 safety who recorded 55 tackles and defended 15 passes. Shawn Hofman of Euclid will handle the punting and kicking duties.

West – The West will try to break through behind a trio of talented passers, including Rocky River's

Matt Lowry (2,511 yards and 37 TDs), Fairview's Colin McNamara (1,504 yards and 12 TDs) and Christian Klink of Holy Name (1,226 yards and 15 TDs). Their targets include Padua's Nick Medaglia, who caught 21 passes and averaged 9.6 yards per reception along with Rex Sunhara of Bay, who averaged 22.6 yards per catch and scored four TDs. In the backfield, Berea-Midpark's Justin Harris will be playing his final game in his home stadium. Harris averaged better than six yards per carry

and scored eight TDs while catching 32 passes for better than 11 yards per reception. The West has a significant size advantage up front on offense with St. Edward's Drew Turner (6-3, 290) and Ben Gauthier (6-2, 260) on the line. Defensively, St. Ignatius DT Ray Brown gives the West some punch up front. Brown had 45 tackles, including 21 for loss, and nine quarterback sacks. Berea-Midpark DL Kenny Sladick (6-2, 215) like Harris will be playing his final game at Finnie Stadium. Linebackers Adam Kantor

(North Royalton) and Chad Bata (Westlake) have good size and can cover a lot of ground. In the backfield, St. Edward safety Kyle Hegedus is a jack-of-all-trades type player. He can defend the run (94 tackles), break up the passing game (3 INT) and return punts (10-yard average, no fumbles). Corey Griffith of St. Ignatius will handle the punting and kicking duties. ■