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## West wins by converting East turnovers into points

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FOSTORIA -- In a game that featured eight News-Messenger area representatives, it was turnovers that doomed the East squad Saturday night in the 26th annual Fostoria Athletic Boosters' Time Warner East-West All-Star Football game held at Fostoria Memorial Stadium.

The East squad that featured five players from Fremont schools, three from Lakota and one from Woodmore, committed eight total turnovers -- three leading to West touchdowns in an 19-7 loss.

"The turnovers really hurt us," said East and former Fostoria coach Tom Grime. "We were a little off sync offensively ... particularly in the first half. The West played really well and their defense played extremely well. They just did what they needed to do."

East quarterback Tyler Brown, of Hopewell-Loudon, was hit the hardest by turnovers, -- throwing three interceptions in the game. His third and final one with 4 minutes to play sealed the game for the West.

Brown, who was falling toward his own sideline while being chased by several West defenders, threw the ball right into the hands of Van Buren's Kevin Ragless, who took the ball and ran 40 yards for the game's final touchdown.

Ragless earned the Andy Bish West MVP Award winner for his game-clinching play.

Brown, an all-state quarterback in Division VI, finished the night throwing 11-of-32 for 166 yards. His counterparts, Eric Gilbert, of Findlay, and Kevan Westenbarger, of McComb, combined for 95 yards on 8-of-22 passing.

"We just made the plays," said West and Liberty-Benton coach Tim Nichols. "Kevin made that play and the defense just seemed to set us up each time."

Defense dominated the game as both squads combined for 389 total yards of offense. The West finished with 173 yards, while the East had 216.

"(It) seemed like we'd have two good plays and one tragedy," said Nichols of his offense. "So, it was hard to get any momentum going, but defenses are usually ahead in all-star games and we were just fortunate that we did that."

The game was scoreless until the second quarter, when the West converted a Brown interception by Upper Scioto Valley's Troy Summa into quick points. Lima Perry's Kory Lane took a Gilbert handoff and went 15 yards up the middle to give the West a 6-0 lead after a blocked extra point.

Following another East turnover on downs on its next possession, a rush by Chad Motter for 17 yards and a reverse by Adrian Nichols for 21 yards setup another West touchdown.

This time it was Gilbert found Bowling Green's Adam Crawford on a 32-yard flag route to the end

zone, giving the West a 12-0 lead at halftime, following a failed two-point try.

"We dropped a lot of passes that really made a difference in the first half," said Grime, whose team only had five first downs in the first half and seven for the game. "They killed some drives for us."

Field position also hurt the East as West punter Brian Schmiedebusch averaged 41 yards on four punts.

"(Schmiedebusch) punted the heck out of the football," said Grime. "He put us back in a couple of deep holes and that really hurt us."

In the third quarter, the East finally got a drive going.

On 3rd-and-15 from the East 20, Brown found Riverdale's Landon Kessler (East MVP) deep down the field for a 58-yard gain. Three plays later, Tiffin Columbian's Eric Chavez ran 15 yards for a touchdown that cut the West lead to 12-7.

Brown completed just one more pass for the West, as he continued to run from heavy pressure.

"I don't think anything was wrong with (Brown)," said Grime. "We just couldn't get any momentum. We kept dropping passes and some of those were miscommunications, but the West did a nice job of bringing people too."

Helping the East on the line for the night were St. Joseph Central Catholic's Zach Gabel, Fremont Ross' Nate Halbeisen and Lakota's Mike Kleman. On the defense, Brad Woleslagel and Tyler Hull represented the Little Giants, while Austin Podach and Austin McGown represented Lakota and Cody Sours (East Sportsmanship Award winner) represented Woodmore.

"I thought we played pretty well defensively," said Woleslagel who had two tackles and numerous hurries. "Offensively ... it was tough to get everyone to learn the playbook in such a short period of time, so you can't fault those guys too much."

For Woleslagel, though, who will attend Bowling Green State University in the fall as a walk-on, the highlight of his night was just getting to play one last time with some old teammates.

"Getting to play with Nate (Halbeisen) and Tyler (Hull) again was the biggest thing this game meant to me," said Woleslagel. "Being able to play with the area's best was a good experience, but playing with Nate and Tyler was what it meant because this is the last time we get to suit up together."

The West leads the all-time series 16-9-1.

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Fremont Ross offensive lineman Nate Halbeisen (59) makes a block during the 26th annual Fostoria Athletic Boosters' Time Warner Cable All-Star Game on Saturday at Fostoria Memorial Stadium. (Jennifer Young-Bower | News-Messenger correspondent)