

# Observerland all-stars contribute to East win

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STAFF WRITERS

"It's a lot of fun," Dan Wilson said, "but it's not just for fun."

That, the former Livonia Stevenson flanker noted, is what the East-West high school All-Star football game is all about.

Wilson was one of several former Observerland prep football stars to participate in the East's 38-14 victory Saturday over the West at Spartan Stadium on the campus of Michigan State University in East Lansing.

The game also featured Observerland players Chris Roberson, a defensive back from Farmington Harrison; Dan Smitherman, a cornerback from Westland John Glenn; Scott Wion, a linebacker from Livonia Clarenceville; and Matt LoPiccolo, a defensive lineman from Redford Catholic Central.

"It's a great experience," said Wilson, who is taking his football skills to Hillsdale College. "Everybody is good. So it was a real good game. It's high intensity."

Wilson played wide receiver and caught three passes for 47 yards, each pass netting a first down that kept East drives alive.

Braylon Edwards, son of former Michigan running back Stanley Edwards, caught three touchdown passes in the first half to key the East's victory. Edwards is also going to Michigan.

"It was obvious," Wilson said, "that he was the best player there, or at least that he dominated the most that day."

"It was one of the better football experiences I've had. I got to play with some of the best players I ever will play with, maybe."

"It was exciting to see all the players perform, and I was happy to be a part of it."

Wilson set up one of Edwards' touchdown receptions with a third-and-12 catch of his own that kept the drive going.

## MSU from D1

"The young talent they have coming up is very promising, and the style of offense they're going to looks really fun to run because it's more spread and wide open."

MSU quarterback Jeff Smoker, who became the starter last season as a true freshman, will be a junior when Stanton, who completed 70 percent of his passes a year ago for 1,911 yards and 25 touchdowns with only four interceptions, arrives on campus.

Stanton expects to be redshirted his first year at MSU and hopes to win the starting job as a third-year sophomore.

"MSU said, as soon as I committed, they told other quarterbacks in the nation, I was their only guy," Stanton said. "No matter where you go, you have to compete. It's just kinda nice to have that (support)."

"I have confidence in my ability, and, hopefully, I will play myself out to my benefit."

Stanton, a shortstop who hit .560 with 48 RBI for the Hawks this year, has been told he can play baseball at State, too.

If he is drafted by a Major League team next year, he would consider doing both, although he doesn't think his options are as strong as former U-M quarterback Drew Henson, who is with the New York Yankees full time.

Stanton is glad to have the decision-making process behind him and his future set as far as football before the start of his senior season.

"Coach (John) Herrington says, 'Who cares where you're playing next year? You're playing for Harrison this year, and that's all that matters,'" Stanton said.

"I thought about waiting, taking visits and going through the whole process. But it makes sense to go to Michigan State. I just decided and I'm glad I did."

"Now I can play my senior year and not worry about anything except playing football."

There has been speculation in the media Harrison star wide receiver Agim Shabaz might join Stanton as an MSU recruit. Notre Dame and Purdue also are said to be interested in the speedy Shabaz.

"The biggest thing is you have to go where you want to go," Stanton said. "You can't make everybody happy."

"I'd love to have him go to (MSU). We work well together, and he's a good friend I've known for the past year. If it's not the place for him, that's fine. He needs to be happy, too."

## FOOTBALL

Edwards scored two plays later.

Roberson, who played defensive back and returned punts and kickoffs, saw his first game action since suffering a season-ending ankle injury last August.

"I've been playing 7-on-7 up at Eastern (Michigan), but it was the first real test as far as making cuts and stuff in a normal

game," Roberson said, adding he's fully recovered from the injury.

"It was the first hitting I've done since I got hurt. I didn't even worry about (the ankle). It's fine now. I just went out and played, because that's how you get hurt when you worry about stuff."

Roberson, who broke up one pass, didn't expect to be a return man, but the coaches gave him that assignment, too, when he

performed well in practice.

"It was just a good feeling to be back playing, hitting," he said. "It got me excited for the upcoming season."

Roberson reports Tuesday to EMU, which thought enough of his talent to offer him a full scholarship despite having missed his senior year of football at Harrison. He will play tailback and slot receiver for the Eagles, however.

"It was a good experience,"

Roberson said of the week he spent at MSU leading to the all-star game Saturday. "I got to meet a lot of new people, people I might have heard about but didn't really know."

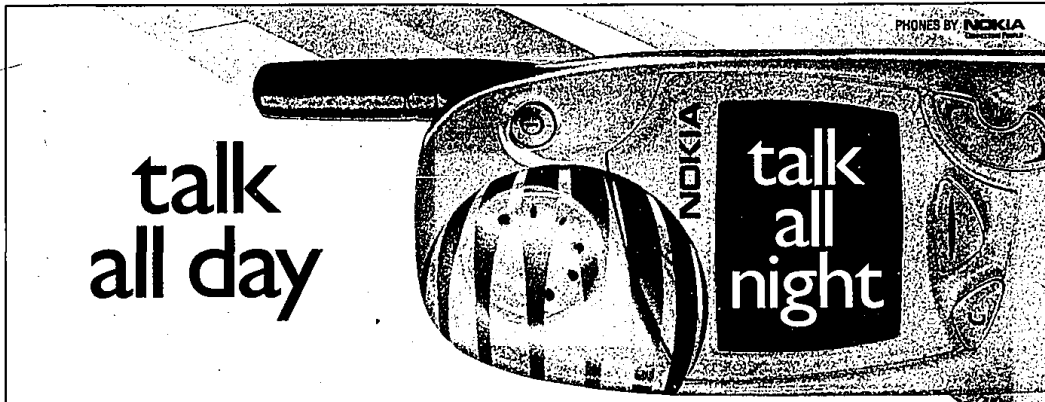
"We did a lot of practicing, though; they had us doing three-a-days. It was hot but I'm in pretty good shape, because I've been doing a lot of running."

Smitherman, who played on both sides of the ball, reports Aug. 9 to Wayne State. He had

four tackles Saturday and was pressed into service as a tailback because of injuries.

"We really had a great week of practice," he said. "The team was really together, and the score showed that."

Smitherman had two carries for 2 yards. LoPiccolo, who is headed to Grand Valley State, had three tackles (one solo) and one assist. Wion, who is going to Saginaw Valley State, was in on four tackles with two assists.



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