

Twisters trounce another foe, 78-0

Four of their 14 first-quarter plays went for touchdowns Saturday as the Michigan Twisters rolled to a 78-0 Lakeshore Football League victory over the cross-state rival Michigan Storm at Willow Run High School's Devin Stadium.

The Twisters (4-0) led by 50 points at halftime. Quarterback Orlando Wright was only six of 17 passing for 98 yards, but three completions went for touchdowns including a 3-yarder to Donté Hamilton, a 42-yarder to Charles Fountain (Westland) and a 13-yard strike to Jason Gibson. Twister running backs rushed for a total of 198 yards in 23 attempts and five touchdowns. Gibson also had a 2-yard TD run.

Jaquan Wright scored two TDs, rushing four times for 46 yards. Matt Koskie rushed for 54 yards on five carries and a TD, while Surill Powell (Livonia) had 46 yards in four rushes and one TD.

The Twisters' kick return teams amassed 163 yards in five attempts led by Hamilton (two for 52), Shaun Blackmon (one for 42), DeVaughn Smith (one for 30) and Fountain (one for 39).

Defensively, the Twisters recorded four sacks and five interceptions, two returned for TDs. The Storm ran 52 plays and were held to 73 yards total offense.

Linebacker Brian Wright (Canton) had two pickoffs in the first quarter, including a 19-yard TD return. Outside linebacker Aaron Brothers (Canton) intercepted a pass in

the third period and returned it 43 yards for a TD.

Other interceptions went to Blackmon, defensive end Kevin Smith and Craig Curry (Garden City).

Linebacker Kam Watson scooped up a Storm fumble and returned it 18 yards for a TD.

Koskie finished with three tackles and recovered a fumble.

Rookie Patrick Gibbons booted all 10 extra point attempts and kept the Storm held at bay with 12 deep kick-offs. The Storm averaged just 9 yards per return.

Special teams player John Irvine (Livonia) finished with one solo tackle and five assists for the Twisters.

The Twisters also received strong play from rookie defensive lineman Richardson

Lacy (Livonia) and center Otis Smith, filling in for injured starters Percy Wright and Earl Sutton.

The Twisters travel Saturday to face the undefeated Southwest Michigan Rage. Kickoff is 7 p.m. at Battle Creek Central High School.

The following weekend the Twisters return to Devin to take on the reigning Lakeshore champion Central Ohio Lions, which captured the 2001 title with a last-second 22-19 win over the Twisters.

Both Percy and Earl are extremely important elements to our team's future," Twisters general manager Glenn Brothers said. "If they happen to miss the next two games against the Lions, our desire to go undefeated could be threatened."

TOURNEY

FROM PAGE D1

West of the Optimist Club. "That's the mission statement. It's street ball, the driveway game, whatever you want to call it."

Teams in three categories will take aim at a regulation-height basket, in hopes of scoring 15 points first.

Standard field goals will be worth one point, while baskets launched from beyond a designated line will count for two.

Basically, everybody plays for a T-shirt and a trophy," West said. "It's a street ball tournament and adults call their own fouls. But there's a 'Gus Buster' (volunteer official) there to resolve any disputes, such as whether a player or his foot on the (two-point) line."

Men, women, boys and girls will take part in the following divisions: Junior, for ages 18 and under; adult, ages 19 and up; and top, for the most experienced. A computer will help match opponents in the adult division to ensure comparable age, height and playing experience, West explained.

"That's to make sure someone who says he's 5-7 isn't 6-2," he said. "If he's not, he's disqualified. The idea is to make it as competitive as possible."

CHARITABLE CAUSE

But making money for local Optimist Club programs is the real idea behind the community's second annual Macker tournament.

Last year, an estimated 400 teams were watched by about 9,000 people, raising \$20,000 for the various charities, youth programs and scholarships. Despite fewer teams, the goal this time around is to generate \$25,000, said West, who shared co-chairman duties with Bob Schiller of West Bloomfield.

West acknowledged that garnering advertising sponsorships has been a tougher sell this year, because of the sluggish, post-9/11 economy. But major co-sponsors Belle Tire, Comcast and Jack Cauley Chevrolet came through to help pay for T-shirts, trophies and other fan-friendly touch-

es. Meanwhile, the Eccentric Newspapers provided free advertising to promote the Macker tournament and numerous volunteers signed on for a myriad of duties.

Some of the 150 volunteers Thursday will begin mapping out 24 half-courts, each with a portable 10-foot-tall basket. Others will work registration tables, monitor traffic, help officiate games (called Gus Busters), keep score, or perhaps serve hot dogs and soft drinks.

Others will help clean up the site on Monday.

West said many of the volunteers were recruited by West Bloomfield High School student-athletes - on the boys and girls basketball teams and the football team. "And in turn, those teams received donations."

"This is a total community event," continued West, noting that the donations of time and services are essential because they help organizers keep costs under control. Among the West Bloomfield entities he listed were the police department, school district, parks and recreation department, township administration and Chamber of Commerce. Oakland County resources also are being called upon.

ORIGINS

The spirit of camaraderie and community is what tournament originator Scott McNeal envisioned when he set up the first Gus Macker Tournament in 1974.

McNeal (whose nickname is Gus Macker) and his brother Mitch put together a tourney, with 18 friends competing on their parents' driveway in Lowell, Michigan.

Today, there are about 70 Gus Macker tournaments each year in North America, all to raise money for charity.

Although Gus Macker could become a township fixture, plans for beyond this year's program remain up in the air. West said the Optimist Club of West Bloomfield holds the option whether or not to stage another Macker tourney in 2003, also at WBHS. "No decision's been made beyond this year."

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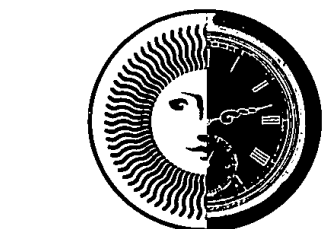
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