



The West defensive players swarmed quickly to the football the entire game during their 42-21 all-star victory over the East in the Kansas 8-Man Division II All Star Football Game on Saturday, June 10 in Beloit. One of the West players was Joey Copper, No. 13 from Northern Valley, who is shown coming up fast to help with the tackle on one of the plays.  
- Photo courtesy of Hill City Times

# Northern Valley gridgers perform in all-star game

**By DICK BOYD**  
Joey Copper, Almena, and Clarke Nelson, Long Island, 2006 Northern Valley graduates, were outstanding members of the victorious West squad in the 21st annual Division II 8-Man All Star Football Game, played Saturday, June 10 at Trojan Field in Beloit.

The top senior 8-man players from the two divisions in Kansas are chosen by the Kansas 8-Man Football Association to play in the two all star games.

In the Division II contest, the West won 42-21 and the West also won the Division I game by a 34-8 score.

Nelson was a three-year All-Cheyenne Conference linebacker for the Huskies. He rushed for 1,506 yards his senior year. He played just on offense in the all star contest in Beloit. Nelson was one of the leading rushers, picking up 60 yards on 11 tries for a 5.45 yards per carry average and did some outstanding blocking for his teammates out of the backfield.

Copper was a two-year All-Cheyenne Conference quarterback and all conference selection as a defensive back this season. He played defense in the all star game and was brilliant. In addition to making bone jarring tackles, he also intercepted two passes thrown by East starting quarterback Kevin Midgett, Chetopa.

Copper was in for one offensive play when he threw a perfect pass to Keith VenJohn for two extra points in the fourth quarter.

Copper was also the punter for the West team. He had to punt only two times and averaged 30.5 yards.

Northern Valley head coach Chuck Fessenden was honored at halftime when a plaque was presented to him by the Kansas 8-Man Football Association in recognition of coach Fessenden's 30 years of coaching at Northern Valley. This is Fessenden's only coaching position. He became the Huskies' head football coach following graduation from Kansas State University in Manhattan.

Fessenden has one of the best coaching records in Kansas. His Huskies have won 240 games and lost 75 for a 76 percent winning average.

"Clarke and Joey played really well," said coach Fessenden.

"Clarke played fullback. He ran hard and blocked well.

"Joey was aggressive on defense. He was never beaten on any passes and got his hands on a lot of them. He made a lot of tackles. Joey received a knee injury in a practice scrimmage on Thursday but recovered in time to do a real good job on Saturday."

Weskan's Gabe Cox, who played quarterback for the West, scored three touchdowns and rushed for a record 220 yards. He also broke the record for the all star game's longest running play from scrimmage with a 75-year keeper down the left side to start the third

quarter. Cox's long run broke the former record of 73 yards set by Shane Baird of Northern Valley in 1986. Cox's rushing total broke the previous record of 173 yards set by Midway-Denton's Tyler Martin, also in 1986.

Rodney Landis, running back for state champion runnerup Palco, had a great day as well. He carried the ball 17 times for 107 yards for a 6.3 yards per carry av-

erage and scored three touchdowns.

Mark Belisle, guard from Palco, played most of the offensive series for the West line and did a great job of blocking.

The West rushed for 464 yards and had eight yards through the air for 472 total yards of offense. Meanwhile, the West defense limited the East offense to just 132 yards rushing and 94 passing for a total of 226.



The blocking by the West squad was superb in their dominating 42-21 win over the East in the Kansas 8-Man Division II All Star Football Game on Saturday, June 10 in Beloit. In the background on this play, West fullback Clarke Nelson, Northern Valley, can be seen knocking an East player to the ground so a teammate can gain yardage.  
- Photo courtesy of Hill City Times

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# Norton grad signs to play softball for Colby Community College

**By DICK BOYD**  
Danielle LeClair, 2006 graduate of Norton Community High School, has signed a letter of intent to play softball for Colby Community College.

Unlike some signees with the Lady Trojans, LeClair did not play softball in high school since Norton Community High School does not have a softball program.

LeClair gained her experience and skills playing in recreational summer leagues. She began playing recreational softball in Hill City when she was 5-years-old. First through sixth grade, she played in the Norton Recreational League. She has also played American Softball Association 12 and under softball in Norton where her coaches were David Wolf and Starla LeClair.

She has also played 16 and under softball in Hill City where her coaches were Ed Foster and son, Alan. Last summer, LeClair played 18 and under softball for the Sweet Thunder in Colby under coach Carl Adams, who is also the head softball coach at Colby Community College.

This summer she is playing for the reorganized Lady Storm in Norton.

"Danielle played for me through Sweet Thunder," said coach Adams, who was chosen "Coach of the Year" in the Jayhawk Conference this year. "She's a hard worker. She's a go-getter."

Adams said those who play summer leagues are very worthy of considering to play college ball. "It shows a commitment by those who want to get better," he said. "I

put more weight on summer ball because of better competition."

Typically, Adams said summer leagues have more older, more experienced players, like juniors and seniors who play in high school. Not every high school player plays in summer leagues.

LeClair won't be the only player on the Trojan roster without high school experience. Amy Foster and Tiffany Long, both from Hill City, did not play in high school. Both are teammates of LeClair's on the Norton Lady Storm team this summer.

LeClair has played a variety of positions in summer leagues. Adams expects her to play in the outfield for the Lady Trojans.

She is the daughter of Starla and Jeff LeClair of Norton.



Danielle LeClair, 2006 graduate of Norton Community High School, signs a letter of intent to play softball for Colby Community College. Also sitting are her parents Starla and Jeff LeClair. Also pictured are, from left, Colby Community College head coach Carl Adams and assistant coach Ryan Sturdy.  
— Photo courtesy of Colby Community College

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