

South 12, North 7: Pass Interceptions Rule the Day as South Defeats North 12-7 in 49th Annual All-Star Football Game

(Game story by Dave Giles, Minnesota All-Star Football Game Historian)

In a game where a record six pass interceptions were recorded; it was fitting that the South's winning points came via an interception return for a touchdown. The South All-Stars scored two touchdowns 54 seconds apart in the second quarter and held off a late North rally to defeat the North All-Stars 12-7 in the 49th Annual Minnesota High School All-Star Football Game (known as the Minnesota Football Showcase) at U.S. Bank Stadium.

With the win, the South leads the all-time North-South series 17-10-1. The South leads the current North-South series (2011-2021) 9-2. The South has won all five All-Star games played at U.S. Bank Stadium. The South has now won five games in a row, which is the longest South winning streak in game history and ties the longest overall winning streak in game history (North 1945-56, 1952-54).

The first quarter was scoreless, although the South threatened to score on their first possession. Emmett Johnson (RB Holy Angels) returned a North punt 65 yards to the North 10-yard line with 10:03 left in the first quarter. From there, the South advanced to the 8, but lost three yards on a fourth and goal end-around play.

After the early South threat, the teams traded possessions in the first quarter. The North took over at the South 43 with 3:16 left in the quarter after a bad snap in the shotgun formation on fourth down resulted in a 25-yard loss for the South. The North then drove deep into South territory as the first quarter ended, the longest play being Eli Gilman's (RB, Dassel-Cokato) 14-yard run to the South 20. The second quarter began with the North first and goal at the South 9. The North advanced to the 7 and attempted a 23-yard field goal (Darius Givance with the attempt). The field goal was blocked by Chase Carter (DL, SMB Wolfpack) ending the North threat.

Taking over at their 10-yard line, with Mankato East's Jacob Eggert at quarterback, the South drove 90 yards in 13 plays in 5:21 for their first touchdown. The longest play of the drive was Eggert's 23-yard run to the South 45. Emmett Johnson carried six times for 19 yards on the drive. The touchdown was a 16-yard pass from Eggert to Tyler Von Bank (WR Mound Westonka). A two-point conversion run failed and the South led 6-0 with 5:37 remaining in the second quarter.

After the South score, the North started at their 27 with Connor Develice (Andover) at quarterback. Two carries by Anthony Lewis-Royal (RB White Bear Lake) moved the ball 15 yards to the North 42. On first down from the North 42, Develice's pass was intercepted by Tyrique Williams (DB Chanhassen) at the South 46. Williams sprinted untouched down the left side 54 yards for the South touchdown. A two-point conversion pass from Evan Bearth (QB Park) was incomplete and the South led 12-0 with 4:43 remaining in the second quarter.

The teams traded possessions the remainder of the first half, with three pass interceptions recorded in the final two minutes. The interceptions were by South Drew Lundeen (DB Redwood Valley) with 1:14 left, North Colton Hackel (DB Perham) on the very next play with 1:06 left and North Darius Givance (DB Champlin Park) on the last play of the half. There was no scoring in the third quarter. Each team had two possessions, with no scoring threats. As the third quarter ended, the North was on the move and had advanced to the South 34.

The North drive continued into the fourth quarter. On fourth and 14 from the South 38, Connor Develice's pass was intercepted by Logan Gareis (CB, Eden Prairie) on the South 18 to end the North drive. The North then forced a South punt and took over at their 20 after a holding penalty with 4:21 remaining.

With Connor Develice at quarterback, the North executed a crisp 8-play, 80-yard drive for their only score. Mixing the run and the pass and some razzle dazzle, the North scored on a 10-yard pass from Develice to Wyatt Sawatzke (WR Monticello). Darius Givance added the extra point and the South's lead was trimmed to 12-7 with 2:45 remaining.

On the North scoring drive, Sawatzke caught three passes for 66 yards, including a double pass from Develice to Joe Russell (RB Robbinsdale Cooper) to Sawatzke which went for 45 yards to the South 14, setting up the touchdown two plays later.

The North attempted an onside kick, but the South recovered at the North 49 (recovered by Drew Kittleson, WR Blooming Prairie). The South turned the ball over on downs at the North 40 with 1:41 left. On fourth and five from the North 45, Develice's pass was intercepted by Zach Juckel (LB Lakeville South) with 37 seconds remaining. It was the fourth interception of the game for the South.

The South then lined up in the victory formation and knelt the ball down to end the game.

Head Coaches: North – Marc Franz, Rogers; South – Ray Betton, Shakopee
North Captains: Connor Develice (QB Andover), Camden Erskine (OL, Concordia Academy), Jayce Walrath (LB Sauk Rapids-Rice), Mason Wilson (DL, Stillwater)

South Captains: Joey Gerlach (DB, S Woodbury), Emmett Johnson (RB Academy of Holy Angels), Logan Larson (DL East Ridge), Martin Koivisto (OL Shakopee)

2021 MVPs: Offense, North: Wyatt Sawatzke, Monticello (WR); Defense, North: Darius Givance, Champlin Park (DB, CB); Offense, South: Emmett Johnson, Academy of Holy Angels (RB), Defense, South: Tyrique Williams, Chanhassen (DB, CB)

SCORING SUMMARY BY QUARTERS:

Team	1	2	3	4	Total
North All-Stars	0	0	0	7	7
South All-Stars	0	12	0	0	12

SCORING SUMMARY:

First quarter:
No scoring

Second quarter:
South – Tyler Von Bank (Mound Westonka 4A) 16-yard pass from Jacob Eggert (Mankato East 5A) (run failed) 5:37 (South 6-0)
South – Tyrique Williams (Chanhassen 5A) 54-yard pass interception return (pass failed) 4:43 (South 12-0)

Third quarter:
No scoring

Fourth quarter:
North – Wyatt Sawatzke (Monticello 5A) 10-yard pass from Connor Develice (Andover 5A) (Darius Givance Champlin Park 6A kick) 2:45 (South 12-7)

Uniforms: North – White on white, purple trim; South – purple on purple, white trim