

Vance enjoys time at Shrine Bowl



Anders Vance, a 2016 Louisburg High School graduate, signs an autograph for a couple fans on July 30 following the Kansas Shrine Bowl at Emporia State University. Vance and the East squad won going away, 48-27.

The Kansas Shrine Bowl brought a lot of unforgettable memories for Anders Vance, but the one he will remember the most didn't happen on the football field.

Vance spent a week at Emporia State University preparing for the annual all-star football game as a member of the East team. The 2016 Louisburg High School graduate developed a lot of friendships along the way as he was the starting center that helped the East to a 48-27 win over the West squad on July 30.

As much fun as that was, he will never forget what happened two days before.

Vance and the rest of the Shrine Bowl players met with patients from the Shriners Hospital for Children (SHC) out of St. Louis. Not only did he get to meet them, but Vance also took part in several stations that helped him understand what it was like to live the life of a patient.

"Those kids are just amazing," Vance said. "That is what stuck

out to me is just how tough these kids are. They are tough as nails and pretty inspirational. We took part in different stations, including one that had us try and tie our shoe with just one hand. I don't know how they do what they do."



Vance's Louisburg teammates (from left) Austin Moore, Mason Koechner and Grant Harding made the trip down to Emporia to watch Vance play in the Shrine Bowl.

The purpose for the Kansas Shrine Bowl is to raise money every year for Shriners Hospitals across the United States. The Shrine Bowl generates close to \$70,000 each year for the hospitals.

SHC is a healthcare system of 22 hospitals dedicated to improving the lives of children by providing pediatric specialty care, innovative research and outstanding teaching programs for medical professionals. Children up to the age of 18 are eligible for care and receive all services in a family-centered environment, regardless of the patients' ability to pay.

Vance reported to Emporia State a week before the game to take part in practice with his East teammates. It wasn't a vacation for any of the players as they practiced every morning, had

film in the afternoon and another practice in the evening.

Then came the game as Vance was the starting center and helped the East to a quick lead as it scored 19 straight points in the game's first seven minutes. Vance, who is headed to Pittsburg State to play football this fall, teamed up with fellow Pitt State signee in Rossville quarterback Tucker Horak.

"It was good to be back at center again and I thought we played pretty well, especially early," Vance said. "It was nice to get the win too because a lot of the West players were pretty cocky all week. To be able to score all those points early was really nice."

The West actually scored 20 unanswered points itself and took a 20-19 lead before the East answered with a touchdown right before halftime.

"The coaches really challenged us at halftime," Vance said. "They told us the only thing we were missing was effort and I think everyone of us came out ready to go in the second half."

The East certainly did that as it outscored the West 22-7 in the second half to earn its second straight Shrine Bowl win and three out of the last four.

The entire week was something Vance will cherish for a long time to come.

"To be honest, it was a pretty awesome experience," he said. "Whether it was meeting the kids, or getting to know new people or bonding with my new teammates. I really loved all of it."

With the completion of the game, Vance's high school career has officially come to an end and will report to Pittsburg State this week to begin his collegiate journey with the Gorillas.

Vance has actually been in Pittsburg since late May and has been participating in offseason workouts with his new teammates.

“I am really looking forward to playing at Pitt State,” Vance said. “I have been working hard this summer and staying down in Pittsburg and coming home on weekends. It is just a great opportunity for me and I can’t wait to see what happens.”