

In his final football game, Vincent shines for East in Shrine Bowl



Louisburg's Nathan Vincent started for the East defense in the Kansas Shrine Bowl last month at Fort Hays State University and had a big tackle late in the contest.

HAYS – Nathan Vincent said goodbye to the sport he loved and did so going up against some of the top seniors in the state of Kansas.

He started playing football in elementary school and loved it ever since. Still, Vincent was taken on a different path as he signed with Iowa State to join the track and field program.

Vincent was selected to play in the 50th annual Kansas Shrine Bowl on July 15 at Fort Hays State University, in what turned out to be his last-ever football game.

“Being able to represent Louisburg one more time at the Shrine Bowl will be an experience that I will be forever grateful for,” Vincent said. “It’s something I’ve seen great players do for years, and to be able to play in it myself was surreal.”

Another Louisburg graduate, Jase Hovey, was also selected to play in the game but was unable to attend to due football obligations at South Dakota.

Although Vincent’s East team lost a close one to the West,

21-20, he played a big role on the East defense and helped keep his team in the game.

Vincent, who played on the offensive line during another all-star game earlier this season, wasn't expecting much playing time when he got there, but he got more than he bargained for.

"I loved playing defense for the East squad and I prefer it over offensive line almost always," Vincent said. "I felt I played some of my best football, honestly. I came into the camp thinking that I would maybe play in the fourth quarter, but I ended up starting and playing almost the entire game. Playing that well against that caliber of players was so much fun and I felt very proud after the game."

Late in the fourth quarter, the West side was trying to run out the clock and faced a 4th-down and 1. With the game on the line, Vincent came through for the East.

On a run to the outside, Vincent read the play and shot through to make a game-saving tackle that gave the East offense one more shot to win it. It turned out to be his last-ever tackle.

"We knew we needed a stop right there if we even had a chance to win and they loaded up my side of the line with an extra three guys and I knew right where the ball was going to go," Vincent said. "It reminded me of when we played Tonganoxie either last year or two years ago, when they would do a heavy set and run right at it. I just read the play well and filled the open lane and stopped them. That being my last tackle is something I'll never forget."

As memorable as the game was for Vincent, it was his time preparing for the Shrine Bowl that left a lasting impact on him. The Shrine Bowl is 501(c) 3 non-profit charity that produces annual events and related activities, with net proceeds benefiting Shriners Hospitals for Children. The Kansas Shrine Bowl has sent over \$3.7M to Shriners Hospitals

for Children.

In the days prior to the game, Vincent and the rest of the Shrine Bowl players had a chance to meet with some of the patients and he quickly realized what this game was all about.

“The Shrine Bowl experience overall was one of the coolest and most memorable things I have ever gotten to be apart of,” Vincent said. “They always say that the Shrine Bowl is so much more than a game but I never knew how true that was until I got there. We were educated on what the Shriners hospital is and even got to meet and listen to some of the patients.

“I never knew how much of an amazing organization and group of people the Shriners organization is. Everyone I met there was kind and extremely passionate about what they do. It was just awesome.”