

Paradise Bowl Review & Award Winners

"News, Notes & Quotes from the Game"

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By: Draft2003 Staff

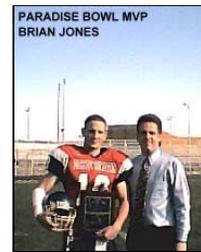
St. George, UT -- The Midwest pulled out an exciting 36-31 victory over the West in Saturday's **2nd annual Paradise Bowl**, as a near capacity crowd watched as Utah native wide receiver Aaron Boone (Kentucky) caught the game-winning touchdown with just over a minute left in the ballgame. Boone raced down the sideline for the score, and the Midwest defense kept the West out of the endzone on the final two plays from scrimmage, as Utah State quarterback Jose Fuentes tried to change the final score with 0.1 seconds left on the clock. The Award winners for Saturday's game were as follows: Game MVP -- Toledo quarterback Brian Jones, Midwest MVP -- Hofstra running back Arlen Harris, West MVP -- Cal-Davis wide receiver Michael Oliva, and Special Teams MVP -- Troy State wide receiver Andrew Amerson.

Scouts from several NFL team remained behind to watch the hard-fought contest. After the ballgame we gathered some reports/analysis of the week from them along with previously questioned NFL personnel who began to leave the Utah area on Thursday and Friday. Here is a look at who they felt helped themselves the most this week... through both the practice sessions and game. This list is not in any order, as we combined the notes of everyone questioned to formulate the results...

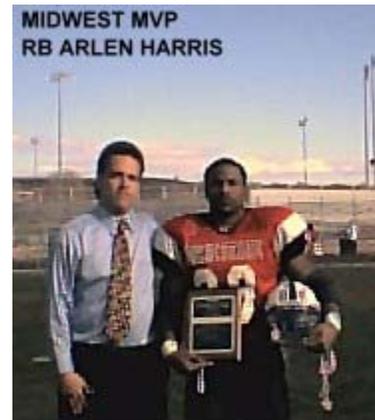
MIDWEST: TE/FB/LS Tommy Collins (Connecticut), CB Trent Findley (Tennessee-Martin), DB Jesse Sowell (Houston), FB Mike Denard (Oklahoma State), DE/OLB Antwan Bynum (Missouri), RB Arlen Harris (Hofstra), OL/LS Bobby Brandt (Indiana), WR David Kircus (Grand Valley State), DT LaWaylon Brown (Oklahoma State), DE Andrew Tippins (Minnesota-Mankato)... the overall opinion was that Eastern Illinois QB Tony Romo would be the highest player selected off of the Midwest Roster... likely between rounds 4-5...

WEST: LB Raymond Wells (Arizona), TE Casey Fitzsimmons (Carroll), WR Michael Oliva (Cal-Davis), WR Paris Jackson (Utah), DT Garrett Smith (Utah), DT Tonga Mouna (Southern Utah), CB Jamal Wynn (UNLV), WR/RT Devin Houston (Utah), DB Jamar Glasper (Utah State)... the overall opinion was that the West Roster had a steady group of prospects... but no one that really stood out across the board... the player given the best chance to be drafted high was Colorado State CB Rhett Nelson... thanks to his size/speed combination... most scouts questioned said 5th round was likely...

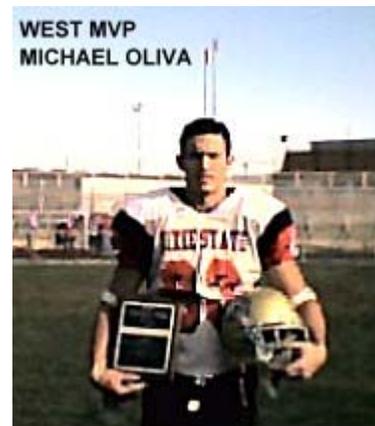
INJURIES: No major injuries were reported coming out of the game... Notre Dame OL Ryan Scarola missed the game with a twisted right ankle... Kentucky WR Aaron Boone played with a bit of a pulled quad... Occidental DL



Paradise Bowl MVP Toledo QB Brian Jones (left) stands with John Murphy of Draft2003 after his three-touchdown performance in Saturday's victory



Hofstra #28 RB Arlen Harris (right) was named Midwest Team MVP... in his first action of the season... Harris rushed for a game-high 53 yards on six carries, while scoring a highlight reel 10-yard touchdown on a pass from QB Brian Jones



Cal-Davis #83 Michael Oliva was voted the West Team MVP... he had 5 catches for 79 yards, including 20-

Kevin Watson also played with a quad injury... Tennessee-Martin CB Trent Findley came out in the first half... he felt a twinge in his leg and decided to play it safe... team doctors felt it was best to be conservative... QB Cory Paus played well early... but did not re-enter the game... he was coming off of a broken right leg... and once he colded down... it was best not to chance getting re-injured at this stage of the game...

MIDWEST REVIEW:

(Jones) -- Completed 12-of-18 passes for 192 yards and three scores... led the team down the field effectively... showed good poise in the pocket... an accurate passer that could be an effective system QB for a team that likes throwing short-to-intermediate routes... great attitude... teammates really enjoyed seeing him succeed on Saturday...

(Harris) -- Seeing his first game action of the year... he caught a 10-yard TD... where he eluded two defenders at the 5... side stepped a third at the two and jumped into the endzone, as a fourth tried to tackle him... he showed excellent quickness to the corner... turned it upfield on several attempts... did not get the chance to return, but recorded to very good blocks to spring RB Montrell Lowe... he could be a real surprise if he runs sub.4.5 and does 22-24 reps at his Pro Day...

(Lowe) -- Showed good ability on kickoffs... still learning... but did much more north/south running on most of his returns... took two out to the 40-plus yard line... also ran hard on his carries... should receive a strong look as an all-purpose back...

(Denard) -- 250-pound blocker who showed he has good hands out of the backfield... and also broke a few nice runs... light on his feet... plays with power... underrated contributor... add in his special teams ability... and this kid has a lot to offer...

(Kircus) -- Continued to showoff his playmaking skills... had 5 catches for 140 yards and two scores... including 76-yard touchdown catch-and-run... quick in and out of his routes... very good hands... did not get the chance to return, which is an area most scouts wanted to see if he could contribute... headed to the Hula Bowl... with his stock rising...

(Amerson) -- Quick feet... able to find openings on his returns... took a fierce shot, but held on the ball... had a few good catches in the game, as well... he has a smallish frame... but if he can blaze a few impressive 40-times... he may receive a look as a return man in training camp...

(Boone) -- Professional all the way... attitude, work ethic, demeanor... first-class kid... practiced only 10 plays this week... scores game-winning touchdown in front of 200

yard touchdown



Troy State #81 WR Andrew Amerson was named Special Teams MVP... returning six punts for 82 yards... and adding three catches for 57 yards

family and friends... playmaker... had three catches for 68 yards, including 39-yard touchdowns... over the past two years he scored 19 times on just 59 catches... needs to rehab his pulled quad, so he is 100% for his Pro Day workouts... averages 4.55 at 6-3, 212 pounds...

(Collins) -- Caught 20-yard touchdown... has good intangibles... coaches really liked his work ethic... being looked at by some teams as TE/FB hybrid... may also see some time at H-Back... the fact that he can deep snap will help his value tremendously... several teams were interested in his complete package...

(Harp) -- Two excellent grabs in the game... caught the ball well all week... good blocker... has the body to increase his weight/strength... people would like to see him be a bit more aggressive in everything he does... does not take plays off... but looks more determined on some than others... did well for himself this week...

(Brandt) -- Played well at right tackle... showed good footwork in the game... kept advancing pass rushers off the quarterback... still needs to get stronger at the point of attack... gets a little too upright at times... for the most part plays with good balance... former tight end... he is a better athlete than advertised... his snaps were strong all week... a little tall for what most teams desire... but he works hard on special teams... that will help him make it at the next level...

(Bynum) -- Two sacks and several pressures... most will look to convert him to a standup edge rusher... or 3-4 OLB... needs work on his pass coverage skills... great attitude... good football IQ... determined athlete... had a solid week, especially in 1-1 drills...

(Brown) -- Did not have a great ballgame... but made some plays... needs to use his hands more to shed blockers... he has a great frame (6-5, 299 lbs.)... shows upside as a pass rusher... tends to come off the ball too high...gives blockers easy access to his chest... there is a lot to work with here...

(Tippins) -- Small school pass rusher... led his school with 25 sacks over his career... had two big knockdowns... was in the backfield all day... a little short... but has a solid motor... and gets upfield quickly... also made a strong stop on an inside run...

(Rasmussen) -- Versatile defensive lineman... has played DE, DT and NT in college... long frame... he could add 10-15 pounds easily... recorded 1.5 sacks... played his best as the week progressed...

(Grigson) -- Spirited player on the field... broke up a few plays... firm tackler... hits with bad intentions... his ability to contribute immediately on special teams is what grabs your attention... he is also coming along nicely at inside linebacker...

(Sowells) -- Forced a fumble... made a few good hits... dropped his head once, which led to a receiver avoiding his tackle attempt... showed very good range... practiced during the week at all three secondary spots...

(Watson) -- Had two big pass breakups... and also a few good tackles... used his size to his advantage on the outside... kept faster receivers in front of him... smart kid... has some upside as a defender... and special teams prospect...

(Goss) -- Savvy defender... always around the ball... had a pass breakup... made another strong play that officials called a penalty on him... did not get the chance to showcase his punt return skills... has good strength for his size... excellent quickness...

WEST REVIEW:

(Fuentes) -- Stood tall in the pocket... was under a lot of pressure... completed 24-of-46 passes for 324 yards... nearly brought them down the field for another score... better arm strength than advertised... but his accuracy was off at times...

(Casteberry) -- Ran hard... had 34 yards on just five carries... quicker than he is fast... does not have breakaway speed... hits the hole hard... able to gain yards between the tackles... his hands/blocking skills are still questionable...

(Palmer) -- Mighty mite was used all over the field... RB, WR, RT and even tried to throw two passes... very quick... made two impressive catches... also did well on his returns... smallish prospect with a lot of heart...

(Jackson) -- Had the best practice week of any receiver on the West... but did not show exciting speed in the game... most scouts estimate him at 4.6... which would knock him down into being a free agent...

(Briscoe) -- Has similar size to Jackson... he made 3-4 fine catches... does not have breakaway speed... good possession-type... has a chance as a #5 or 6 receiver... but lacks the speed to be a return man...

(Oliva) -- Caught everything thrown his way... great over the shoulder touchdown catch... works hard in practice... great concentration... had 5 catches for 79 yards... in two all-star games... he has 12 catches for 207 yards and one touchdown...

(Fitzsimmons) -- Made two very good grabs... also avoid several tacklers... and carried a pair for a first down on his first catch... lacks the ideal size for a tight end... but could be a very good pass catching H-Back... would help himself if he could get up to the 245-pound range...

Offensive line struggled as a whole... they gave up seven total sacks... and several other QB pressures... there is some good upside on the line... but they need conditioning... improved technique... and added strength at the point of attack... Fresno State OT Joe Schey and New Mexico State OG Shalimar Jackson are the two most likely candidates to go to training camp with a team... OL Zach Wilson (USC) was not as impressive as his resume indicated... and the other outside blockers failed to show the footwork to remain at OT... center Cody Johnson is steady, but not outstanding...

(Mounga) -- Made a trio of fine plays in the game... had an average week of practice... but was focused and excited in the game... plays with a great deal of emotion... is a little stiff... and does not always play with ideal balance or pad level... when he does... he was hard to block... had one sack... one pass deflection... and a strong stop at the point of attack... his game performance helped him out...

(Smith) -- Was able to get an inside pass rush going on several series... he caused problems with his strength and quickness off the ball... had a down year in terms of production... but finished his career with 35 tackles for loss and 15 sacks... he could be a solid role player at the next level... although he has some personal issues that will be reviewed by teams...

(Deckhart) -- Plays hard... does well as a limited area defender... a bit stiff in coverage... good read/react skills... more of a backup/special teams player for the league... but gives a solid effort... and just loves being out on the field...

(Wells) -- Made one key defensive play... and impressed with his practice workouts all week... very quick to the ball... stronger than advertised... willing to do whatever it takes to succeed... has great special teams upside... reportedly runs in the 4.55 range... and seems like he could carry 230-235 pounds....

(Glasper) -- Hard-hitting safety... had a key interception... then came back with 2-3 strong tackles in the final quarter... was a consistent performer in college... does a lot of little things well... has a shot as a role player/special teams prospect...

(Young) -- Looks a bit stiff in coverage... scouts estimate his 40-time in the 4.6 range... but the kid loves to hit... he had two huge hits in the game... willing to sacrifice his body... both were good open field hits.. could use his strengths on special teams... was also a fine college blitzer from his safety spot... had 11 sacks this year alone...

(Wynn) -- Smallish defender... but made some very good plays on special teams... had one of the hardest hits of

the day on punt returner Andrew Amerson... needs some work at cornerback... and looks more quick than fast... average workout numbers will likely make him a free agent...

(Nelson) -- Had the best upside of any West defensive back... but got beat badly on one play for a touchdown... confident defender... but double moves seem to give him trouble... he tried making a play on the ball... instead the receiver took the other way for a score... a bit over-anxious at times... but if he runs sub.4-4 times at 6-0, 190 pounds... he will get himself drafted...