

**For Mike Burke, time for football** - *Columbia's three-sport standout is set for next Sunday's East-West all-star game.*

By Mike Gross, Assistant Sports Editor, Lancaster *Sunday News*

"Mike Burke IV helped Columbia High School's basketball team to the second round of the District Three Class AA playoffs last winter.

"He's emerged as one of the better javelin throwers in the Lancaster-Lebanon League this spring.

"But he's really ready for some football.

"Burke will have his Gridiron Jones satisfied when he plays in the Pennsylvania State Football Coaches' Association East-West All-Star game at 2 p.m. Sunday, May 6, at Gateway High School near Pittsburgh.

"Burke will be a wide receiver for the East team, the same position at which he was all-state twice at Columbia, and will play at Villanova University this fall.

"'I'm excited just to go to practice,' Burke said Friday.

"'Being able to compete in full pads, it kind of rekindled the competitive flame.'"

"The East team, coached by Abington Heights High School head coach Joe Repshis, held a two-a-day practice last Sunday and will do so again today at Downingtown West High School.

"It will drill again Saturday at Gateway.

"Burke is the only L-L League player or coach involved. He is one of five wideouts on the East roster.

"'I've been kind of splitting time at the X receiver, just me and another guy,' Burke said.

"The East-West game began in 2001 at Altoona's Mansion Park. The East has won seven of the 10 meetings.

"The game wasn't played last year, "due to lack of sponsorship and a variety of other issues," according to the PSFCA website.

"The game will continue going forward, according to the PSFCA, being played at Gateway in even-numbered years and Downingtown West in odd-numbered years.

"Columbia won the District Three Class A football title last season. Burke caught 84 passes for 974 yards and 11 touchdowns despite missing two games with an ankle injury."

"He's confident he's in football shape. Being a three-sport athlete has helped. So has the training and nutrition regimen he's gotten from the Villanova coaches.

"'It's helped me a lot with my speed,' Burke said. 'I could tell in the first [East-West] practice that my speed was really good.'"

"Size shouldn't be a problem. At 6-foot-3, 200 pounds and looking bigger than that, Burke resembles a tight end more than a wideout.

"'Everybody says that,' he admitted.

"The game kickoff is at 2 p.m. next Sunday. It will be broadcast on Pennsylvania Cable Network.

"Sponsors are the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh.

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