

Los Medanos College's Hampton stars in JC All-American game

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LOS MEDANOS College sophomore Thomas Hampton had no choice but to wait.

Here it was, halftime of the Triumphant Sports Junior College All-American football game on Dec. 12 in Chandler, Ariz., and Hampton, the state leader in rushing yards in the 2009 season, hadn't played a down on offense.

In the second half, everything changed.

The native of The Bronx, N.Y., ran for 177 yards on 11 carries, including a blockbuster 98-yard touchdown run in the fourth quarter that erased a 14-12 deficit for the California All-Star team in a 19-14 win over the United States' squad.

Hampton was named offensive MVP of the showcase game. Talk about a glass half full.

Of his long touchdown run, Hampton said, "We ran a slam play, I broke through and it was over."

He was admittedly a bit awe-struck by the magnitude of the event.

"At first I was kind of nervous, playing with a bunch of great players," Hampton said. "I hoped I could still play my game against guys from all over the country. The competition was good ... It was a different feeling, but I guess I played up to it."

The game seemed like a perfect caper to a remarkable season for Hampton, who led the state in rushing from Week 1 to Week 10. He ran for 1,708 yards overall, was selected as Offensive MVP of the Region II All-California junior college squad and first-team All-American.

A 5-foot-9, 185-pound game-breaker, Hampton is leaning toward Division II West Texas A&M University, which has recruited him along with the University of Arkansas-Monticello.

LMC coach Van Boschetti believes Hampton has the goods for Division I play. He said major colleges are focusing primarily on filling needs at defensive back and defensive linemen in this phase of recruiting. College of San Mateo defensive back Eddie Elder, the defensive MVP of the junior college All-American team, recently committed to Arizona.

"A lot of major colleges would rather have (running backs) come in and play four years," Boschetti said, "But Tommy's pretty special. He does have Division I speed. They want a guy, if he breaks through, he can he go all way. Tommy can. He's already proven that many times."