

The Gazette



AMERICAN LEGION

DIVISION I TOURNAMENT

Volume 20, No. 3

Delano, Minnesota

Sunday, July 31

Six teams stay in contention for the state title

The field of a dozen contenders was cut to six heading into the the third day of the Minnesota American Legion Division I Tournament at Delano.

Forest Lake and Woodbury are the last of the unbeaten, and will play today at 7 p.m.

All games Sunday are at Municipal Field.

In the losers' bracket, Little Falls will play Wayzata at 10 a.m. and Hamline Purple will play Maple Grove at 1 p.m. The winners of those two games will play off at 4 p.m.

Those games were re-arranged from the original bracket so the same teams would not play each other a second time.

In the eight games played Saturday,

Waconia beat Champlin Park 4-3, Little Falls topped Princeton 5-1, Eastview beat Rochester 9-4, Wayzata beat Grand Rapids 6-1, Wayzata beat Eastview 10-2, Little Falls topped Waconia 5-4, Woodbury defeated Hamline 9-4 and Forest Lake beat Maple Grove 6-2.

The tournament will conclude Monday with the championship games. Minnesota will send two teams to the national regional which will be held at Bismarck, N.C. beginning this coming Wednesday.

The Division II tourney is being held at LeSueur-Henderson. Saturday's, scores included: Glenwood 1, Pierz 0; Giantvalley 10, LeSueur 1.

That tournament will conclude on Sunday.



OUT AT HOME -- Rochester Patriots catcher Joey Devlin tags out Eastview's Ryan Zellmer.

Everyone's a pitcher for 37-3 Wayzata this year



Parker Hlavacek delivers a pitch for Wayzata in the team's victory over Grand Rapids.

"Every arm available" is the motto for the Wayzata American Legion Baseball team.

In compiling a 37-3 record this season, Wayzata has used 11 different pitchers, and six of them have won at least four games.

Parker Hlavacek, normally the second baseman for the Trojans, improved to 4-0 on the mound Saturday afternoon at Delano Municipal Park as his team eliminated Grand Rapids 6-1.

"It was a good performance, but I was disappointed to give up a run." Said Hlavacek, who pitched the first six innings before turning things over to Danny Deis.

"Danny would be the best pitcher on a lot of Legion teams, but he has only pitched a few innings for us," said Hlavacek.

"Before the game today, Gator [Coach Adam Goethke] told me, 'Throw strikes and you'll be fine.'"

Hlavacek followed orders, and so did Deis as they combined on a four-hitter.

Other top guns on the Wayzata pitching staff are Brendan Broady (6-0), Jarett Briol (5-0), Donny Schroeder (5-0), Cody Goedderz (5-0), Thomas Skoro (4-0), Eric Stolt (3-1) and Peyton Gallagher (3-0).

Jake Marsh, the ace out of the bullpen and also the starting catcher for Wayzata, was the Rob Wassenaar Award winner as the best pitcher in the 2015 State Legion Baseball Tournament. Coach Goethke calls on Marsh any time the situation becomes dicey in the late innings.

Hall of Famer Mike Gort: 'It's all about the kids'

By John Sherman

When he first became an American Legion Baseball volunteer, the last thing Mike Gort ever expected was his election to the Minnesota Legion Baseball Hall-of-Fame.

"I don't think anyone gets involved in a program like this thinking they're going to receive an award," he said after he was inducted into the Hall of Fame at the State Tournament banquet July 28 at Delano High School. "Every other district director is as worthy of this award as I am."

Prior to becoming the State Vice Director for Division II American Legion Baseball, Gort served as District 7 Baseball Director.

Gort's long service to baseball in Southwestern Minnesota makes him a worthy recipient of the prestigious Legion Hall-of-Fame honor. Earlier this year, he was also named to the Marshall A's Amateur Team Hall-of-Fame.

In addition to playing for the A's, managing the A's and serving on the team's board of directors, Gort has impacted the sport

in other ways. For 43 years, he has umpired many big games throughout the state, including championship games in the State American Legion Tournament.

What has moved Gort to devote so much of his free time to American Legion Baseball?

"First of all, I am a veteran," said Gort, who served his country in the Navy before he enrolled in college. "The American Legion Baseball program extends the season and offers more opportunities for the players to travel. The Minnesota Legion Baseball program is one of the strongest in the nation, and I am proud to be involved."

Gort's service extends outside of his home state. He has umpired regionals throughout the country and has also served as a director at regional tournaments. Gort has been asked to direct the Northeast Regional in Bristol, Connecticut this summer.

"Our goal in the Legion program is to make baseball an enjoyable experience for the kids," said Gort, a member of the Mar-

shall, Minnesota Legion Post for more than 30 years.

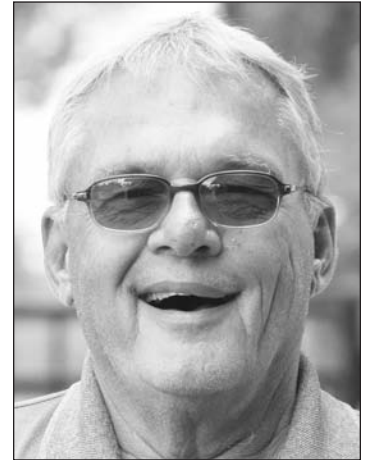
Prior to becoming a coach, umpire and league director, Gort enjoyed an outstanding athletic career. He was a four-year starting quarterback for the Danube High football team, while also earning letters in basketball, baseball and track. He earned five letters in baseball, which was his favorite sport at the time.

After serving in the Navy, he played football and basketball for Willmar Community College. Then it was on to Southwest State University in Marshall to continue his football career.

Ironically, Gort is one of the few high school quarterbacks ever to become a collegiate tackle.

"When I was playing for Willmar, the coach told me he had quarterbacks, but needed another tackle," said Gort. "So he made me a tackle. At first, I didn't even know the proper lineman's stance."

In his senior year at Southwest State, Gort was named team MVP as a defensive



Mike Gort

tackle.

After college, he turned back to baseball, playing for the hometown team in Marshall, the A's.

As he looks back on his career, Gort has no regrets.

"I have had a chance to play and coach, and I have officiated just under 8,100 games in 40-plus years. I'm a jock, and I just can't get away from sports. I love hanging around with other people who have the same interests I do."

Woodbury's Meyer stars vs. Hamline Purple

Max Meyer, a baseball player with a bright future, showed why the University of Minnesota considers him a prime recruit during a 9-5 victory over Hamline Purple Saturday afternoon in Delano.

Meyer's pitching performance, coupled with Woodbury Blue's errorless defensive play, put Hamline Purple in the losers' bracket and boosted Blue into the winners' bracket finals.

Allowing six hits in six innings, Meyer let his fielders make plays behind him.

"Hamline Purple is a good-hitting team, and I had to use all of my pitches," he said after the game. At a showcase event this summer, Meyer's pitches were clocked between 86 and 90 miles per hour, but his most effective pitch against Hamline Purple was the sinker.

"I was throwing it at about 80 miles an hour, so that worked

well with my fastball," he said.

Meyer has one more year of high school ball, and he has verbally committed to play for Coach John Anderson at the University.

"I hope to be a two-way player [pitcher and hitter]," said Meyer. "The coaches told me I have to work really hard to do that."

Meyer has a 3-1 pitching record this summer along with a .396 batting average from the left side. He is one of those five-tool high school players who projects well at the next level.



Max Meyer of Woodbury Blue pitching vs. Hamline Purple.

Stars of the Day

Adam Hallberg hit two doubles and recorded a pitching save as Little Falls eliminated Waconia 5-4.

Cullen Buck's three hits led Eastview to a 9-4 victory over the Rochester Patriots.

AJ Jenks was the winning pitcher and had a good day at the plate with three hits as Little Falls topped Princeton 11-1.

Jack Stoddard pitched five innings of scoreless relief and was credited with a win as Waconia topped Champlin 4-3.

Parker Hlavacek was the winning pitcher as Wayzata beat Grand Rapids 6-1. In Wayzata's 10-2 win over Eastview, Hlavacek went two-for-three at the plate.

Max Meyer of Woodbury Blue was the winning pitcher and had two hits in a 9-5 victory over Hamline Purple.

Jordan Wilkerson had a three-for-four, three-RBI game as Woodbury Blue topped Hamline Purple.

Cody Goedderz of Wayzata pitched five-hit ball for seven innings in his team's 10-2 win over Eastview. He struck out five and walked only one batter.

Zack Raabe of Forest Lake went four-for-five in his team's 6-2 victory over Maple Grove.

Will Oberg, Wayzata's first baseman, had three RBI on a single and a triple in his team's 10-2 victory over the Eastview Lightning.

Ronnie Sweeny of Woodbury Blue had two hits, two RBI and two runs scored during a 9-5 victory over Hamline Purple.

Justin Schultz of Waconia had the winning RBI on a squeeze bunt as his team eliminated Champlin 4-3 in a game at Zitzloff Field.



Jerry Haugen of St. John's and Paul Blanchard of Southwest State are looking for talent at the Division I state tourney.

What are college coaches looking for at American Legion tourney?

By John Sherman

Everyone connected with American Legion Baseball, even most casual fans, can spot a college baseball coach from a mile away.

During this week's State Tournament at Delano, Loretto and Maple Lake, scouts from all levels are searching for talent, hoping they'll find players who'll make a difference in their programs. In addition to noticing talent, there are intangibles that make certain ball players attractive recruits.

Rob Fornasiere from the University of Minnesota said, "The State American Legion Tournament has been a staple of our scouting forever. We are here to see not only players we've already signed, but also players we would like to recruit."

The Gophers have signed pitcher-infielder Brett Schulze of Maple Grove. Fornasiere is not allowed to talk about unsigned players, in accordance with NCAA rules.

What intangibles does Fornasiere consider in recruiting a player?

"We look for team players, who support their teammates," he said. "Legion is a commu-

nity-based program, in which the high players stick together."

Paul Blanchard, the head coach at Southwest State University in Marshall, Minnesota, said, "In Legion Baseball, you'll see kids playing the game the correct way. It is team baseball, and in that setting you can see a player's skills."

Jerry Haugen, the head baseball coach at St. John's University in Collegeville, said, "At a baseball showcase, you'll see a kid throw 15 pitches in the bullpen with a lot of radar guns out. In Legion Baseball, you see real baseball with game situations, no re-entry and no courtesy runners."

Haugen added that the first consideration in his recruiting for St. John's is academic performance. After that, he looks for good athletes.

"Sometimes we will find a kid with a good arm, who has not pitched much, and we will help him become a pitcher," Haugen noted.

Blanchard said before he recruits a player for Southwest State, he looks for intangible qualities.

"Does he hustle? Does he

back up bases? How does he react to success and failure?" Blanchard asked.

"And what is his baseball IQ?" Haugen chimed in. "I also look at how a player responds to adversity. What happens when the bases are loaded and an umpire calls him out on strikes when the pitch is 8 inches outside?"

Haugen also looks at a player's alertness.

"Does he know who's up? The game situation? What information does he have before the ball is pitched?" the St. John's coach asked.

American Legion Baseball parents and fans should be aware that many, many coaches from the Upper Midwest have watched hundreds of players at the four State Tournament sites this week. Some of the high-profile players are getting another look. And the coaches have also discovered some new talent. One service the State American Legion Baseball committee provides to the coaches free of charge is a scouting guide filled with every player's game stats for the season. This is one of the most valuable tools a college coach can obtain.

Complete summaries second day

2016 Saturday Game Summaries

Game 17

Champlin 002 010 000 00 3 10 2

Waconia 300 000 000 01 4 11 2

Reuter, Nelson (9) and D. Smith. Olson, Stoddard (7) and Logelin. WP Stoddard. LP Nelson.

Justin Schultz of Waconia bunted in the winning run for Waconia in the last of the 11th inning after two singles set the table. Patrick Whelan led Waconia's attack with a three-for-three day. Jack Stoddard pitched five scoreless innings to win on the mound.

Game 18

Little Falls 103 303 1 11 12 2

Princeton 100 000 0 1 4 5

Jenks and Backowski. Kinney, Rademacher (5), Scharber (7) and Rademacher, Scharber (5).

AJ Jenks pitched a complete game as Little Falls knocked Princeton out of the State Tournament Friday morning 11-1. Jenks helped his own cause with two singles and a double. Justin Jenks added three hits for the winners.

Game 19

Eastview 121 002 210 9 14 0

Rochester Patriots 001 001 020 4 14 2

Kadlec, Wilson (8) and Granger. Boehm, Schmidt (3) and Devlin. WP Kadlec. LP Boehm.

Eastview stayed alive in the losers' bracket Saturday morning with a 9-4 victory over the Rochester Patriots. Winning pitcher Zach Kadlec went eight innings as each team had 14 hits. Jack Boehm and Joey Devlin each had three hits for Rochester. Cullen Buck and Owen Granger had three hits apiece for Eastview.

Game 20

Grand Rapids 000 001 000 1 4 1

Wayzata 303 000 00x 6 8 1

Bowman and Shepard. Hlavacek, Deis (7) and Young. WP Hlavacek. LP Bowman.

Wayzata stayed alive in the State Tournament with a 6-1 victory over Grand Rapids Saturday afternoon in Delano. Parker Hlavacek and Danny Deis combined on a four-hitter for the winners. Jake Marsh and Jarett Briol sparked Wayzata's attack with two hits each. Jack Bowman of Grand Rapids pitched a complete game, allowing eight hits.

Game 21

Waconia 000 121 000 4 12 1

Little Falls 001 400 00x 5 8 1

Kinneberg, Martin (4) and Logelin. Swanson, Hallbert (6) and Backowski. WP Swanson. LP Kinneberg.

Little Falls outlasted Waconia in an elimination game at Zitzloff Field in Delano Saturday afternoon. Hunter Swanson was the winning pitcher for Little Falls, and he also hit a key double to generate some timely offense. Adam Hallberg added two doubles for the winners and also recorded a save with four innings of three-hit relief.

Game 22

Eastview 000 000 200 2 7 3

Wayzata 150 003 01x 10 11 0

Albrecht, Wilson (3), Tollefson (7) and Granger, Hall (7). Goedderz, Deis (8) and Marsh. WP Goedderz. LP Albrecht.

Cody Goedderz and Danny Deis combined to pitch a seven-hitter as the Wayzata defense played errorless ball behind them in an elimination game at Zitzloff Field in Delano. Will Oberg, Griffin Schneider and Parker Hlavacek each had two hits for Wayzata.

Game 23

Woodbury Blue 100 050 201 9 15 0

Hamline Purple 000 021 020 5 9 4

Woodbury Blue advanced to the winners' bracket final with a victory over Hamline Purple Saturday afternoon. Max Meyer pitched the first six innings for Woodbury Blue before passing the torch to Tyler Gustafson, who finished the game. Jordan Wilkerson led Woodbury's attack with three hits while Meyer, Ronnie Sweeny, Nolan Glunz, Sebastian Holte-Mancera and Nick Gehrt had two hits apiece. Jordan Ammons had three hits to lead Hamline Purple.

Game 24

Forest Lake 001 021 020 6 10 1

Maple Grove 000 020 000 2 7 4

M. Wallner, L. Wallner (7) and Walker. Horton, Lewis (8) and Lewis, Gates (8). WP M. Wallner. LP Horton.

Zack Raabe and Cameron Kline combined for seven of Forest Lake's 10 hits in a 6-2 victory over Maple Grove in the winners' bracket Saturday night in Delano. Raabe, who plays shortstop, had four hits and Kline, who plays center field, had three hits. Matt Wallner was the winning pitcher with relief help from his brother Luke. Charlie Horton went three-for-four to lead Maple Grove.