

# Tri-City Red Bunts Past Stillwater, Advances to State Tournament

*New Brighton, Minn. (July 23, 2021)* — Tri-City Red is heading to the state tournament for the fourth consecutive season, after beating Stillwater 8-2 Friday evening in the Sub-State 8 championship game. Ike Mezzenga threw seven innings for Red, with nine strikeouts. Reid Thurston was a big boost at the plate, going 3-3, with an RBI and two runs scored.

After Stillwater jumped into a fourth inning lead after a two-run home run, the TC bats woke up in the fifth; Red scored five runs on four hits, including two squeeze bunts that resulted in RBI singles. Thurston got things started, hitting a one-out single. Ben Rosin then got hit by a pitch, and Cole Hinkel singled -- to load the bases for Leo Fleischhacker, who drew a five-pitch walk to force in a run. With the bases still loaded, Red's next batter, Connor Chervany, executed the first of two squeeze plays, which tied the game. Cooper Kleppe then also drove in a run on a bases-loaded squeeze, while Fleischhacker and Chervany both scored, courtesy of a throwing error by the shortstop during Mezzenga's at-bat, giving Red a 5-0 lead.

The offense wasn't done, however, as Red scored three additional runs in the sixth. Paul Diekoff led off with a walk, advanced to second on a wild pitch, and then scored when Thurston singled into left field. With Thurston on third base, Ben Rosin ripped a double into the right-center field gap to score another run. Rosin then scored from third, when Hinkel hit a sacrifice fly to the left fielder, picking up an RBI for the day and giving Red the 8-2 lead.

Red's run margin was more than enough for Mezzenga, who was dealing on the mound. Two of his nine strikeouts came in the seventh, before inducing a game-ending fly out to Fleischhacker, sending Red to yet another state tournament. Offensively, Kleppe went 2-4 with an RBI -- with Rosin, Hinkel and Chervany all recording hits and RBI.

After attending the District 4 banquet on Tuesday -- and the State Tournament banquet on Wednesday night, Tri-City Red is scheduled to open the state tournament Thursday afternoon at 1 p.m. against the St. Cloud Chutes -- the tournament host team. The team will then turn around and face the Sub-State 10 champions at 3:30 p.m., before rounding out pool-play against the Sub-State 5 champions on Friday. All of Red's pool-play games will take place at Dick Putz Field (St. Cloud Municipal Athletic Complex).

## Game Summary

Tri-City Red 8, Stillwater 2

## Game 26, July 23, 2021

(Sub-State #8 Playoff Game 4)

Stillwater:	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	-	2	6	2
TC Red:	0	0	0	0	5	3	x	-	8	8	1

Stillwater: Wallace; and Voight

Tri-City Red: Mezzenga; and Hinkel

Win: Ike Mezzenga

Loss: Joshua Wallace

## Sub-State 8 Friday Semi-Final Score

Stillwater 17, Lino Lakes 4 (5 innings; Lino Lakes eliminated)