



# American Legion Minnesota Division I Tournament

# Gazette



## Three advance to tourney's final day

Apple Valley will be going to a national regional tournament again.

In the final game of the day Saturday, Apple Valley defeated the other unbeaten team, Wayzata, 7-4.

Apple Valley will advance to the title game today. The team has finished first or second four times in the last seven years.

Rochester Patriots came through the loser's bracket to also make it to Sunday. They will play Wayzata in the semi-final.

Mankato, Hamline Purple, Academy Stars, and Fergus Falls went home Saturday after picking up their second loss of the tournament.

The two teams in the final game Sunday will both advance. The regionals are in Minnetonka and at Appleton, Wisconsin.

The World Series is in Fargo.

In Division II action in LeSueur/Henderson, Pipestone and Eden Valley/Watkins will play for the title on Sunday.

The Division II scores for Saturday were: Royalton 4, Hayfield 2; Esko 6, LeSueur 5; Royalton 7, Esko 3; Pipestone 1, Jordan 0; and Eden Valley/Watkins 6 and Pelican Rapids 2. Pelican Rapids and Jordan will play for third place.

## Umpires: it takes one to know one

By John Sherman

Mike Gort, the Umpire in Chief for the Minnesota Division I American Legion Baseball Tournament in New Ulm, knows what he wants in an umpire.

"I look for umpires with experience and good judgment," he said as he watched a game Friday afternoon at Johnson Park. "I want them to look professional and act professional, and it's important that they understand the rules."

Gort said he is very pleased with the umpiring he has seen this week.

"There have been only a limited numbers of concerns," he noted.

Gort was a star athlete at Danube High School and played in the state basketball tourney in 1962. Football was his primary sport in college and he played all four years.

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Head of the umpires Mike Gort

## Daily stats

### INDIVIDUAL BATTING

Minimum 10 AB	
Sward, Ryan EAG.....	.692
Smith, Jordan WILL.....	.615
Holmquist, Trent WAYZ.....	.571
Mithaugen, Matthew FERG..	.563
Jaede, Tom ACAD.....	.538
Kwak, Kris ACAD.....	.533
Miller, Matt RCH.....	.500
Reesnes, Caleb WAYZ.....	.500
Matzke, Brady BUFF.....	.500
Hovick, Derek RCH.....	.474

### INDIVIDUAL PITCHING

Minimum 5 IP			
Heilskov, Robin RCH.....	0.00	1-0	10.2
Moen, Joe RCH.....	0.00	1-0	9.1
Lloyd, Brock MAN.....	0.00	1-0	9.0
Bodin, Matt APV.....	0.00	1-0	8.0
Maher, Steven ACAD.....	0.00	1-0	6.2
Biagini, Matt HAM.....	0.00	1-0	5.0
Heck, Jake FERG.....	0.84	1-0	10.2
Fangel, Blake APV.....	1.00	1-0	9.0
Anderson, Brian RCH.....	1.00	1-0	9.0
Fischer, Garrett NULM.....	1.00	1-0	9.0

### HITS

Bettenburg, David HAM.....	12
Larsen, Daniel MAN.....	11
Cattrysse, Derrick MAN....	11
Miller, Matt RCH.....	10
5 tied with 9 hit(s)	

### RUNS BATTED IN

Kleinendorst, Kyle GRA....	10
Lulic, Vince HAM.....	9
Miller, Matt RCH.....	9
Bettenburg, David HAM.....	9
Hansen, Derek FERG.....	9

### HOME RUNS

Kleinendorst, Kyle GRA....	3
Long, Lucas ACAD.....	2
Fischer, Garrett NULM.....	2
Kwak, Kris ACAD.....	2
15 tied with 1 home run(s)	

# Tournament called a major success

For most fans, the American Legion state tournament is a nice day at the ballpark watching some good amateur baseball. It all seems to go so smooth and easy.

Behind the scenes, though, is a small cadre of people working fairly frantically to make sure the tournament runs well for the teams, the fans and the community.

“What the New Ulm Committee said they would do, they did,” said Legion Baseball Director Darwin Berg. “And they continued to follow through the whole tournament.”

New Ulm bid on the state tournament about 15 months ago after a failed bid to land a national regional tournament.

“We went to our main baseball committee, and they encouraged us to pursue it,” said Vern Kitzberger, the state tournament co-director. “At that time we picked good committee chairs and encouraged them to delegate. They had good people under them.

The other tournament chair is Paul Sabatino.

Tournament duties include preparing a banquet for 450, finding housing for 320 players and



## Co-chairs

Vern Kitzberger and Paul Sabatino were the head honchos of this year's tournament.

coaches, preparing concessions and souvenir items, and having their plans mesh with the 15 or so people from the Legion who are putting on the actual baseball tournament.

Kitzberger said it was the team of volunteers that made it go. “We just got out of the way. Paul and I just made sure the ball kept rolling.”

Kitzberger said that the fact that New Ulm is a baseball hotbed made pulling off the tournament a lot easier. “The community really supports us. People say, ‘It’s for baseball? What do you need?’”

Putting on a successful state VFW tournament two years ago helped get the volunteers ready for this one, he said. “We want to make this a great experience for the players. We want them to feel like this is a state tournament.”

“I would rate this in the top five of all the Legion tournaments I’ve been to,” Berg said. “I couldn’t be more happy with the New Ulm volunteers and the grounds crew.”

The members of the New Ulm group also included Jean Prochniak, treasurer; Jim Bastian, media; Gordy Palmer, officials; John Fischer, venue; Paul Wieneke, housing; and Toni Breu, banquet.

## \*\*Stars of the Day\*\*

**David Bettenburg** went four for six with two doubles and an RBI, helping to eliminate Fergus Falls. **Derak Hansen** went four for five with a homerun and six RBI for Fergus Falls.

**Boomer Hermes** pitched a nine inning complete game victory for Apple Valley against the Rochester Patriots, allowing eight hits and two earned runs.

**Daniel Larsen** pitched two hitless and scoreless innings for Mankato National to help eliminate the Academy Stars in a tight contest 4-3.

**Robin Heilskov** pitched eight and two-thirds scoreless innings, leading the Rochester Patriots to a shutout victory over Hamline Purple.

**Matt Miller** went two for five with a double and three RBI, leading the Rochester Patriots to victory over the Mankato Nationals.

**Matt Bodin** pitched eight scoreless innings and **Boomer Hermes** went three for five with three RBIs to help keep Apple Valley undefeated in the tournament.



## Working on a no-no

Rochester Patriots' pitcher Robin Heilskov took a no-hitter two outs into the seventh inning Saturday in a 3-0 victory over Hamline.

# Graduate of the year played in Majors



Bill Davis

Minnesota American Legion Baseball's Graduate of the Year for 2009 is Bill Davis of Richfield.

During a long and distinguished athletic career, Davis was All-State in baseball and basketball at Richfield High School. He played in state tournaments in both sports and earned a basketball scholarship at the University of Minnesota.

Davis' greatest success at the U came in baseball. He was the starting first baseman for the Gopher team that won the NCAA title in 1964.

"It doesn't seem like it's been 50 years since I played Legion Baseball," said Davis. "There was no youth baseball in Richfield when I was growing up, so Legion gave me my first opportunity to play summer base-

ball. It was a great experience and a great opportunity to play against the best competition in the state."

Davis eventually played in the Major Leagues and holds the distinction of being an opening-day starter in both leagues, first with the Cleveland Indians, and then with the San Diego Padres.

His career was cut short by a torn Achilles tendon. But he later returned to the diamond as a Senior League player with the Richfield Rockets.

Davis is a member of several Halls of Fame, including the Richfield High and University of Minnesota Halls of Fame. A retired banker, he remains active in the community as director of the Richfield Foundation, an organization that raises funds for needy youth to pursue a variety of activities in the community.

# Senske is 'Mr. Baseball' in the New Ulm community

By John Sherman

In a town full of great baseball players and coaches, it's difficult to designate any one person as "Mr. Baseball."

Yet in New Ulm, the consensus is that it would be Jim Senske, the coach at New Ulm High School for 40 seasons. Every year he coached, Senske's team was a section and state contender, and he finished with a career record of 707 wins and 171 losses.

His teams won 27 conference titles and made 19 state tournament appearances. Although he only won one state championship, he is proud that his clubs went to state on so many occasions.

"Baseball provides you with a lot of successes and a lot of failures," he said when he spoke at the tournament banquet Wednesday, July 29. "In this game, pressure makes you find out if you have what it takes.

"This week, somebody's going to strike out with the bases loaded and somebody's going to get the winning hit. It's how you react to those things that will determine what

kind of ball player you are."

As a coach, Senske preached practice, dedication and strong fundamentals.

"My favorite player was the one who busted his butt to get better," the coach said. "My least favorite player was one who had talent, but questionable work ethic."

Senske listed a few of his favorite ball players from his 40 years at New Ulm High (1964-2003). He was quick to point out that he might have missed a few.

Looking at youth baseball today, Senske said he has one pet peeve.

"No practices and lots of games," he said. "Practice is how you get better. I always said, if you can't hit a curveball practice until you can. If you can't bunt practice until you can."

Senske had some advice for the players in the 2009 State Tournament.

"Appreciate the people around you," he told the group. "The coaches, the parents and the Legion post have all helped you get here."



Jim Senske

# Gort has been umpiring for 35 years

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To stay active during the off-season, he stayed in shape by umpiring baseball games.

Gort has umpired for more than 35 years. He got his start while he was a student at Willmar Junior College. Bill Taunton, a longtime umpire, was Gort's mentor and the man who got him involved in Legion Baseball.

"As a veteran and a member of the Marshall Post, I am proud of what the Legion has done for kids," said Gort.

"Obviously, the Legion's love of country is something I believe in."

Getting back to the State Legion Tournament, Gort said he had a lot of help in assembling the crew for this week's ball games. The first two days, he used a mixture of local umpires and others provided by the Northwest Umpires Association.

The local umps were designated to work the last two days of the tournament.

"I went through Rick Wellmann, who assigns umpires in this part of the state," said Gort. "I can't say enough for the job

Rick did. All of the local guys are really good umpires."

There is an old saying about umpires. If you don't notice them, they're doing a good job. But at the same time, there's nothing wrong with recognizing a job well done. When all is said and done and a state champion is crowned Sunday afternoon at Johnson Park, Gort hopes the fans notice that his umpires are giving everything they have and making the right calls.

# Line scores, summaries from Saturday

## Game 22

Hamline Purple 146 100 012 15 16 0  
 Fergus Falls 102 214 010 11 12 4

Kuesnster, Miller (6) and Lulic. Shaikoski, Hansen (3), Stanislawski (5), Kidder (7), Heck (8). WP Kuenster. LP Shaikoski. HR-Hansen, Fergus Falls.

In the second inning Hamline hammered three doubles and scored four runs. In the third inning, the Purple added 6 more runs to take a commanding lead. At 9:04 p.m., the rains came and the game was halted. The downpour caused a suspended game, and play began in the sixth inning the next morning. Fergus Falls clawed their way back into the game, scoring four runs in the bottom of the sixth to narrow the gap to 12-10.

## Game 24

Apple Valley 002 030 020 7 12 3  
 Rochester Patriots 000 001 020 3 8 2

Hermes and Gretz. Hovick, Roble (4), Sipple (7) and A. Nelson, Rysavy and Eric Nelson. WP Hermes. LP Hovick.

In a game of undefeateds, Apple Valley built a steady lead behind the strong pitching of Boomer Hermes. Hermes went all the way, striking out seven while walking six. Aaron Gretz had two RBI on three hits including a double. Brandon Peterson had two RBI on two hits including a triple. Kris Goodman had two hits. Apple Valley advanced through the winner's bracket and Rochester dropped into the loser's bracket.

## Game 25

Mankato Nationals 001 002 010 4 9 3  
 Academy Stars 012 000 000 3 8 2

Allan, Quame (7), Larsen (8) and Kleist. Hogan, Kwak (8) and Sullivan. WP Quame. LP Hogan. S Larson.

Mankato continued its battle back through the loser's bracket in a nail biter over the Academy Stars of Richfield. The game was tied 3-3 in the eighth when Mankato pushed one across as Ryan Willaert reached on an error and eventually came around to score on a passed ball. Derrick Cattrysse had three hits for the Nationals including a double. James Kiefer had a couple of hits for Mankato. Kris Kwak and Conor Maas had two hits for the Stars. Maas had a triple. Academy Stars bowed out of the tournament with the loss.

## Game 26

Rochester Patriots 010 020 000 3 8 1  
 Hamline Purple 000 000 000 0 5 3

Heilskov, Moen (9) and Nelson. Monson, Bettenburg (8) and Lulic. WP Heilskov. LP Monson. S Moen.

Robin Heilskov carried a no-hitter into the seventh inning and came within one out of pitching a complete game shutout for the Patriots. With two out in the seventh, Jesse Perron doubled to right center. Bob Kinne followed with a single, but Heilskov got out of the inning without harm. In the ninth, Purple strung together three hits, but Joe Moen came in to get the final out and save the shutout. Moen, Alex Peterson and Andrew Roble had two hits each for Rochester and Moen had a double. Kinne and Perron had two hits each for Purple. Rochester now advances to the Sunday first game vs. the loser of the battle of the undefeateds.

## Game 27

Mankato Nationals 300 000 021 6 10 1  
 Rochester Patriots 001 220 70x 12 11 2

Kopel, Watts (5), Kleist (7), Larsen (8) and Kleist and Kiefer. Roble, Moen (8) and Rysavy and Nelson. WP Roble. LP Kopel.

Rochester literally walked into Sunday's semi-final game as they benefited from 15 free passes from the Mankato pitching staff. Coupled with 11 hits and three hit batsmen, the Patriots were able to double up the Nationals 12-6. The loss ended the Nationals long march through the loser's bracket after four straight wins. The Nationals struck first with three in the top of the first, but Rochester chipped away and then put the game away with seven in the seventh inning. For Mankato, Daniel Larsen had four hits including a double. Derrick Cattrysse had two hits. For the Patriots, Derek Hovick was three for four. Jordan Stokes and Matt Miller had two hits each, and Hovick drove in three runs. With one more win, Rochester can advance to a national regional American Legion tournament.

## Game 28

Wayzata 100 300 000 4 8 2  
 Apple Valley 000 060 10x 7 5 4

Soule, Johnson (5) and Trygstad. Bodin, Prichard (9) and Gretz. WP Bodin. LP

Wayzata took an early lead behind a strong defense, the clutch pitching of Billy Soule and a three run third inning featuring two RBIs from Calab Reesnes and one RBI from Logan Brau. Apple Valley responded with a six run fifth inning featuring a three run triple by Mark Hermes, giving Apple Valley their first lead of the game. Matt Bodin pitched eight strong innings for Apple Valley, allowing only four unearned runs. Apple Valley added an insurance run in the seventh and Dylan Prichard saved the victory with a scoreless ninth inning.