12 teams carry on in state tourney

There were a few surprises on the first day of the state tournament as teams worked their way through a grueling 16-game schedule.

Number one-ranked Eastview dropped its first two games and was eliminated from the tourney. Eastview joined Fergus Falls, Monticello and host Chaska as the four teams who went home.

Four teams went undefeated: Lakeville North, Burnsville, Edina and Tri-City Red.

The remaining eight teams will work their way back through the losers' bracket. They are: New Ulm, Eden Prairie, Waite Park, Grand Rapids, Alexandria, Minneapolis Giantvalley, Winona and Hopkins.

In the 10 a.m. games Saturday, Minneapolis Giantvalley will play New Ulm at the Chanhassen Field, while Alexandria will take on Eden Prairie at Chaska.

In the 1 p.m. games, Winona will face Grand Rapids at Chaska, and Hopkins will face Waite Park at Chanhassen.

In the battle of the undefeateds, Tri-City will take on Burnsville at 4, and Edina will face Lakeville North at 7 with both games at Chaska.

There will also be six games on Sunday with the championship games on Monday.

Two teams will advance to the Central Plain Regional at Dickinson, N.D. next week.

In the Division II Tournament at Sacred Heart, Plato defeated Eden Valley-Watkins 5-1, Stewartville topped Luverne 10-1, Ely nipped Paynesville 2-1 and Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton topped host Sacred Heart 11-3. Championship action will take place Sunday at Sacred Heart.

Tri-City Red rolls on first day

By Gail Kalata and John Sherman

Tri-City Red and Hopkins hooked up in a memorable game to end the first day of State Tournament play at Chanhassen High School.

In the end, Tri-City walked away with a 3-1 victory and a place in the winners' bracket semifinals on Saturday.
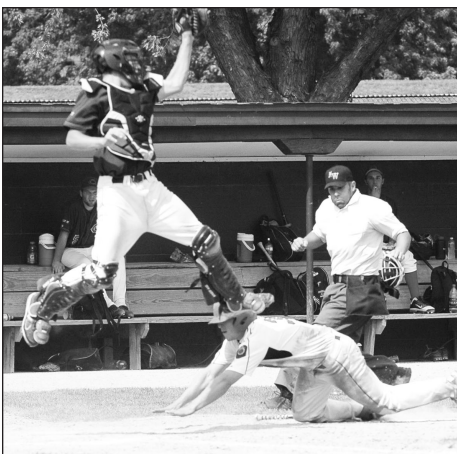
The win boosted Tri-City Red's season record to 36-9. Earlier in the day, Hopkins had beaten No. 1-ranked Eastview 5-4 and Tri-City Red had knocked off New Ulm Gold 9-5.

"We had a goal to get here all season long, and to make a good run," said Tri-City head coach Steve Grasley, who played on Tri-City Red's Legion World Series championship team in 1999. "Nothing has changed. We're still pursuing that goal and finding success."

Grasley likes the progress Tri-City Red has made since the beginning of the season.

"The team has really grown, and everyone has stepped up," he noted. "Everyone believes

Alexandria's Nick Knoblach slides in safely as Chaska's Carter Schmidt elevates for the throw.

Stars of the Day

John Pryor of Minneapolis Giantvalley pitched a five-hit complete game with nine strikeouts to beat the Waite Park Silver Stars 4-1.

Dan Kronebusch of Winona LeJetz went four-for-four and drove in the winning run in a 5-4, 10-inning victory over Fergus Falls.

Danny Baer, Edina's center fielder, went two-for-three with a triple and also walked twice in an 8-1 victory over Grand Rapids.

Max Knutson of Tri-City Red had four RBIs in a 9-5 opening-round victory over New Ulm Gold. In the second round, Knutson pitched his team to a 3-1 victory over Hopkins.

Matt Sinderson, Hopkins' catcher, hit a three-run homer during a 5-4 upset win over No. 1-ranked Eastview.

T.J. Frericks pitched a complete game to help the Waite Park Silver Stars to a 12-2, eight-inning victory over Monticello in an elimination game at Shakopee's Schleper Stadium.

Blake Stockert of Alexandria pitched a four-hitter in a 2-1 loss to Edina Friday night at Chaska Athletic Park.

Joel Klinkhammer of Lakeville North pitched a complete game to beat Moticello 7-0 in the opening round.

Zach Hoffmann of New Ulm Gold went three-for-four as his team eliminated Eastview 8-5 in a game at Chanhassen.

Danny Baer dives to make the catch in center field in Edina's 8-1 victory over Grand Rapids. Photo by Brian Nelson.

Edina survives the first-day tourney rigors with two wins

By John Sherman

Edina has a history of success in the State American Legion Baseball Tournament with championships in 1955, 1969, 1982 and 1983.

And now, Post 471 is hungry for a fifth title. It was a case of survive and advance on the first day of the tournament Friday. Edina won its morning game 8-1 over Grand Rapids, but did not break it open until the late innings. Matthew Hopfner pitched seven strong innings before the bullpen crew took over. Mitchell Larson and Geoff Fisher each pitched an inning to finish it off.

Hopfner, who was making his first state tourney start ever, said, "I tried to take this the same way as any other game – staying confident and making my best pitch."

The lefty relied on a high fastball and a sharp breaking ball to control Grand Rapids' bats.

Danny Baer hit a triple and a single for Edina and made a spectacular diving catch in center field.

"I was not sure I would get there to make that catch," said Baer, "but the ball seemed to hang up there for an hour and a-half."

Baer said he loves playing defense behind Hopfner. "When he's on the mound, we always have a chance to win," said Baer.

In its second game Friday night, Edina had an even tougher test. The Hornets managed only four hits against lefty Blake Stockert of Alexandria, but still managed to escape with a 2-1 victory. Hopfner and Mark Handberg provided the runs with RBI singles. Harrison Egly pitched six innings for Edina and Larson, making his second appearance of the day, pitched the last three.

"Good teams win ugly sometimes," said Edina assistant coach Tommy Nevers after the Alexandria game.

Assistant coach Tim Beasley liked the way both Edina pitchers stepped up. "Our sophomore [Egly] did a great job," he said. "And Moose [Larson] did what we expected. Nothing fazes him."

Nick Leer, Edina's shortstop and captain, made two big defensive plays in the last of the ninth to secure the victory.

"We found a way to pull it out tonight," said Leer. "In that situation, I want the ball hit to me."

"Their pitcher surprised us," said Larson. "And their hitters put some good swings on the ball. Our bats have to come alive tomorrow."

Edina head coach Nick Kennedy took a calculated risk against Alexandria by saving Alex Lampert, his staff ace. Lampert is expected to pitch on Saturday in Edina's winners' bracket semifinal game against Lakeville North at 7.

Lampert is 10-1 this season after winning two starts in the Tenth District Tournament last week. Edina (37-6) took the district title, beating Hopkins 7-3 in its last game.

"Our pitching has been outstanding all year," said Kennedy.

The defense has backed the pitching. Edina is strong up the middle with Denn catching, Leer at short, Spencer Egly at second and Baer in center. Corner outfielders Nick Omodt in left and Will Vanderbilt in right form a solid trio with Baer. Larson, Handberg and Hopfner are capable corner defenders.

Tri-City rolls in first day action

Continued from Page 1

in themselves and in the team as a unit, and that together we will find continued success."

In the win over New Ulm Gold, Max Knutson drove in four Tri-City Red runs. In the second game, Knutson pitched eight strong innings against Hopkins in his duel with Jack "Skip" Hamilton.

Tim Shannon has pitched almost every big game for Hopkins this summer, so it was no surprise when he got the call against the state's No. 1-ranked team, Eastview, in the first round Friday at Chanhassen.

Shannon didn't disappoint the Hopkins crowd. With a fastball that touched 90 miles per hour, he scattered eight hits over seven innings and left with a 5-2 lead.

"It doesn't really matter who we're playing," said Shannon after the game. "My plan was get ahead, stay ahead. We go into every game thinking we're going to win."

Hopkins relief ace Nate Ellis pitched the last two innings. The eighth was a bit rocky as he allowed two hits and two runs, but the ninth was perfect with Ellis striking out two batters and getting an out on a ground ball.

The ground ball was one Ellis stabbed. It was a quick shot back through the box that he fielded head high.

"That is probably the most athletic thing I've done in a while," he said. "After the seventh inning, I thought Tim [Shannon] might keep going. I would have trusted him to finish."

Catcher Matt Sinderson provided big offense for Hopkins with a three-run homer in the top of the sixth inning.

"I was lucky to be put in that position," said Sinderson. "We had a man on third, and I went up there thinking that if I got one up in the air we would score a run. When I hit it, I thought it would be in the gap, so I was on my horse. Then I saw the umpire signal a home run."

Game summaries for day one

Game 1
New Ulm Gold   000 100 400 5 10 1
Tri-City Red   004 203 00x 9 10 1
Guggisberg, Blackstad (5) and Shaul. Elfstrom, DeCaster (7) and Anderson. WP Elfstrom. LP Guggisberg.
   Right fielder Max Knutson had four RBIs in Tri-City Red's 9-5 first-round victory over New Ulm Gold at Chanhassen High School. Karl Elfstrom and Ethan DeCaster shared pitching duties for Tri-City, which improved to 35-9 with the victory. Catcher Jason Shaul drove in three runs for New Ulm Gold.

Game 2
Hopkins   000 005 000   5 9 1
Eastview   000 011 020   4 10 0
Shannon, Ellis (8) and Sinderson. Strey, Trusty (6). WP Shannon. LP Strey. Save Ellis. Home Run Sinderson, Hopkins.
   Hopkins pitcher Tim Shannon scattered eight hits over seven innings as the Flyers upset top-ranked Eastview in a first-round game at Chanhassen High School. Nate Ellis chalked up the save. Catcher Matt Sinderson hit a three-run homer in the top of the sixth to give the Flyers a 5-1 lead.

Game 3
Fergus Falls   003 001 000 0 4 7 2
Winona LeJetz 001 002 010 1 5 9 2
Rengel, Johnson (6), Gaustad (9) and Heinen. Benson, Rohde (8) and Kruse. WP Gaustad. LP Rohde.
   Left fielder Dan Kronebusch singled home Bryan Rohde with the winning run in the bottom of the tenth as Winona LeJetz beat Fergus Falls 5-4 at Victoria. Roger Brosnahan's sacrifice fly in the bottom of the eighth had tied the score for Winona. It was a big day at the plate for Kronebusch, who went four-for-four and scored two runs. Peter Gaustad and Walter Heinen each had two hits for Fergus Falls.

Game 4
Burnsville   020 000 013 6 13 0
Eden Prairie 000 000 000 0 10 0
Hanson and Threlkeld. Mingo, Loats (9) and Halloran. WP Hanson. LP Mingo.
   It was a frustrating afternoon for defending Legion World Series champion Eden Prairie. Coach Scott Hackett's club accumulated 10 hits, but could not score a run. Burnsville had 13 hits for its three runs. Tyler Hanson went the distance on the mound for Burnsville while Cameron Mingo pitched eight innings for Eden Prairie. Luke Chinn led Burnsville with three hits.

Game 5
Giantvalley   002 010 001   4 8 3
Waite Park   000 001 000   1 5 1
Pryor and Manion. Gregory, Mueller (8) and Jarosch. WP Pryor. LP Gregory.
   In a first-round game at Schleper Stadium in Shakopee, Fifth District champion Giantvalley of Minneapolis won 4-1 over Waite Park with a complete game from pitcher John Pryor. He allowed five hits. First baseman Andrew Whitacre led Giantvalley's offense, going three-for-four with two RBIs.

Game 6
Monticello   000 000 000 0 7 3
Lakeville North 100 130 11x   7 8 0
Frederick, Hanson (8) and Kounkel. Klinkhammer and Alexander. WP Klinkhammer. LP Frederick.
   Lakeville North pitcher Joel Kinkhammer pitched a six-hit shutout and struck out 10 in a 7-0 first-round victory over Monticello at Shakopee's Schleper Stadium. Austin Striet and Dalton Lehnen each drove in two runs for the winners. Shortstop Hayden Laimer led Monticello with three hits and third baseman Jake Schmitz had two hits.

Game 7
Edina   100 001 015 8 9 1
Grand Rapids 100 000 000   1 7 4
Hopfner, Larson (8), Fisher (9) and Denn. Carlisle, Brewer (8), Cournoyer (9) and Bischoff. WP Hopfner. LP Carlisle.
   A pitchers' duel between Matthew Hopfner of Edina and Grant Carlisle of Grand Rapids was the story of the game through seven innings. Hopfner and Carlise both left after seven, and Edina finally broke it open with five runs in the top of the ninth. Center fielder Danny Baer led Edina the plate, going two-for-three with two walks and two RBIs. Mark Handberg had the big hit in the ninth, a two-out, two-run single. Edina improved to 36-6.

Game 8
Alexandria   001 000 102 4 9 4
Chaska   011 000 000   2 6 6
Backhaus, Knoblach (9) and Leary. Rinnan, Wickstrom (7), Mihalkko (9) and Schmidt. WP Backhaus. LP Rinnan. Save Knoblach.
   Beau Backhaus of Alexandria pitched 8 and 1/3 innings of six-hit ball to beat the host team, Chaska, 4-2 at Chaska Athletic Park. Nick Knoblach, Zach Peterson and Jeff Swedberg each had two hits for Alexandria. Cole Sweeney had two of Chaska's six hits.

Game summaries continued

Game 9
New Ulm Gold   100 002 401   8 8 4
Eastview   002 300 000   5 9 2
Wendinger and Shaul. Fredrickson, Moorse (7), Bechstein (7) and Heisler. WP Wendinger. LP Fredrickson.
New Ulm Gold eliminated No. 1-ranked Eastview in a game at Chanhassen High School. Colin Wendinger showed stamina on the mound, scattering nine hits in a complete game. New Ulm first baseman Zach Hoffmann had three hits for New Ulm, which finished 25-9.

Game 10
Hopkins   000 000 010   1 4 6
Tri-City Red   001 000 11x   3 8 0
Hamilton and Sinderson. Knutson, Herringshaw (9) and Anderson. WP Knutson. LP Hamilton. Home Run Sam Hentges, Tri City Red.
Lefty Max Knutson of Tri-City Red won a pitchers' duel from Hopkins' Jack Hamilton 3-1 in a game played Friday at Chanhassen High School. Knutson allowed only three hits in eight innings before Matt Herringshaw naile down a save. Right fielder Brett Becker and second baseman Mitch Fredrickson each had two hits for Tri-City Red and first baseman Sam Hentges hit a home run.

Game 11
Fergus Falls   100 001 0   2   5 3
Eden Prairie   240 551 x   17 16 1
Rasmussen, Nersten (4), Johnson (5), Hanson (6) and Reinertson. Nablo, Phillips (6) and   Halloran, Green (6). WP Nablo. LP Rasmussen.
Eden Prairie exploded for 16 hits and beat Fergus Falls 17-2 in an elimination game at Victoria. Luke Lind, Derek Soderbe rg, Michael Blauert and Cody Wetmore had three his apiece for Eden Prairie. Mile Nablo was the winning pitcher. Brady Hanson had two hits for Fergus Falls.

Game 12
Burnsville   000 011 031   6 9 2
Winona LeJetz 000 001 100   2 5 4
VanderWoude, Chinn (6) and Kenly. Norton, Kronebusch (8) and Kruse. WP VanderWoude. LP Norton.
Burnsville came up with three runs in the top of the eighth inning on its way to a 6-2 victory over Winona LeJetz in Victoria. Brian VanderWoude pitched no-hit ball for five innings to earn the victory. Kolten Kenly and Tyler Hill each had two hits to lead Burnsville's attack.

Game 13
Waite Park   100 220 34   12 15 2
Monticello   000 000 20   2   9 5
Frericks and Jarosch. Host, Kounkel (6) and Z. Johnson. WP Frericks. LP Host.
T.J. Frericks pitched a complete game for Waite Park and the Silver Stars' offense produced 15 hits. Center fielder Bryan Benson went four-for-five for Waite Park. Ben Alvord added three hits.

Game 14
Giantvalley   200 000 0   2 6 1
Lakeville North 000 930 x 12 13 3
Peterson, Nelson (4), Pryor (5) and Manion. Jacobson and Striet. WP Jacobson. LP Peterson.
Nine runs in the fourth inning lifted Lakeville North to its second win of the day, 12-2 over Minneapolis Giantvalley. T.J. Evanson hit two doubles in Lakeville North's big inning. Winning pitcher Jordan Jacobson allowed six hits and struck out five in seven innings.

Game 15
Chaska   102 000 200   5   7 0
Grand Rapids   010 000 42x   7 11 2
Cotner, Wickstrom (7), Mihalko (8) and Rinnan. Cournoyer, Geislinger (4), Bischoff (6) and Frazier. WP Geislinger. LP Wickstrom.
Grand Rapids scored four runs in the bottom of the seventh to erase Chaska's lead and win the losers' bracket game, 7-5. Winning pitcher Andre Geislinger had two hits for Grand Rapids as did Hunter Shepherd, Grant Carlisle and Billy Hammann. Matt Kirchoff and Isaac Tewes each had two hits for Chaska, which finished the season 18-14 overall.

Game 16
Edina   011 000 000   2 4 0
Alexandria   000 000 100   1 7 2
H. Egly, Larson (7) and Grove, Denn (7). Stockert and Leary. WP Egly. LP Stockert. Save Larson.
Edina overcame a tremendous pitching performance by Alexandria lefty Blake Stockert, who limited the Hornets to four hits. Harrison Egly was the starter and winner for Edina and Mitchell Larson picked up a save. Matthew Hopfner and Mark Handberg had RBI singles for Edina.