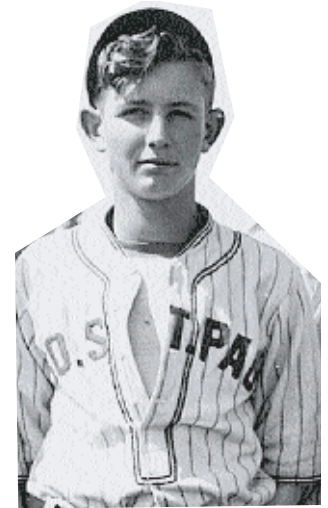




American Legion Minnesota Division I Tournament

Gazette



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Sunday, Aug. 4, 2013

*** Stars of the Day***

Eastview Pitchers Kevin Wobschall, Jacob Bechstein and Ben Voss combined to throw a no-hitter in the Lightning's 12-0 victory over the St. Cloud Chutes.

Bjorn Hansen of Excelsior hit a grand-slam home run to help his team beat Grand Rapids 8-6 in a losers' bracket game at Edina's Braemar Park.

Derek Branson of Excelsior allowed only one run in 6 and 1/3 innings to pick up the win against Grand Rapids.

Logan Schramel scattered eight hits as the St. Cloud Chutes eliminated Alexandria 4-1.

Patrick Strey picked up the pitching win and went three-for-five at the plate as Eastview eliminated Mahtomedi 6-5 in 11 innings.

Geoff Fisher of Edina pitched four-hit ball over six innings to get the win as his team eliminated Osseo 8-3 at Eden Prairie's Round Lake Stadium.

Luke Lind hit a home run in Eden Prairie's 8-7 victory over Burnsville at Edina's Braemar Park.

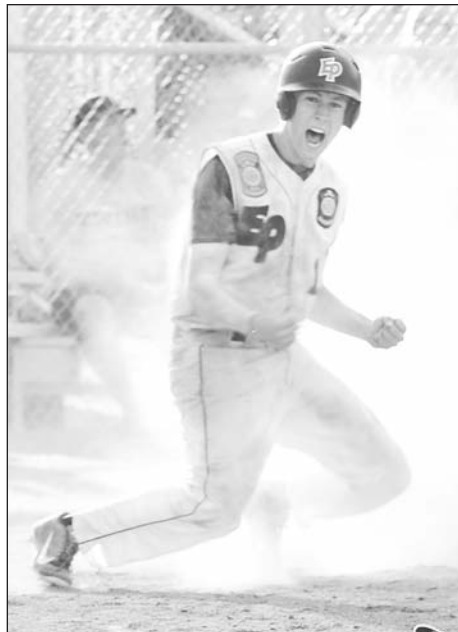
Drew Miller had three hits, including a homer, in Eden Prairie's win over Burnsville.

Tyler Hanson, Burnsville's third baseman, had three hits in the Cobras' 8-7 loss to Eden Prairie.

Jack Schmidt of Forest Lake starred in his team's 16-4 victory over the Rochester Patriots. He went four-for-five at the plate and pitched a complete game.

Matthew Hopfner of Edina pitched a six-hitter to blank Excelsior 6-0 in a game at Round Lake Park in Eden Prairie.

Danny Baer of Edina had two singles and a double in a 6-0 victory over Excelsior.



Michael Blauert of Eden Prairie scores the go-ahead run in an 8-7 win over Burnsville. (Photo by Al Zdon)

Eden Prairie wins both ways

By John Sherman

Whether it's a blowout or a close game, the Eden Prairie American Legion Baseball team knows that this is the time of year when you have to win.

Eden Prairie's success in recent years includes a Legion World Series title and a World Series runner-up finish, so it's no surprise that the Eagles have won their first three games in the 2013 State Tournament.

In games played Aug. 2 they beat St. Francis 13-1 and Osseo 7-1. The next day, in a battle for winners' bracket survival, the Eagles clawed their way to an 8-7 12-inning win over

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Six still fighting for Division I championship

Twenty-four games into the American Legion Division Tournament at Edina, six teams are still battling for the title.

Two teams remain unbeaten in winners' bracket of the double-elimination tournament, Eden Prairie and Forest Lake.

Eden Prairie outlasted Burnsville 8-7 in 12 innings, despite six errors in the game, and Forest Lake outscored the Rochester Patriots 16-4.

Both Burnsville and Rochester will now have to advance through the losers' bracket beginning Sunday.

Two other teams had to win twice in the losers' bracket to advance. Eastview and Edina stayed in the hunt for the championship with two victories.

Play will continue Sunday with all four games at Braemar Field.

In the first game Sunday, Eastview will play Burnsville at 10 a.m. In the 1 p.m. game, host Edina will take Rochester.

The winners of those games will play at 4 p.m. and Eden Prairie and Forest Lake will face off in the battle of the titans at 7 p.m.

The championship games will be played Monday at Braemar with the final two teams advancing to the Central Plains Regional.

At Bird Island, the Division II tourney continued. Morris topped Taconite 13-3 and LaCrescent beat Providence Academy 10-8 to advance to the championship game. Winnebago/ Blue Earth topped Pine Island 8-5 and Bird Island/ Olivia beat Hawley 9-1. Winnebago/ BE will play Bird Island for the consolation title, while Taconite and Providence will meet for the third place title.



Edina's 'Boys of Summer' returned to Braemar to take a bow at the State Legion Tournament. Pictured are from left: Jim Williams, Mike Halloran, Andy Krane, Brian Martinson, Pat Donohue, Danny Carroll, Rob Wassenaar, assistant coach Paul Blanchard and head coach Bruce Barron. (Photo by Al Zdon)

Edina's '83 champions enjoy 30th reunion

By John Sherman

Most American Legion players only dream of playing in a World Series.

It takes tremendous talent to get there, along with dedication, a great work ethic and a little bit of luck.

Edina had all of those components when the Green Machine won the 1983 World Series.

Members of that legendary team returned to their roots at Braemar Park Saturday night for a short program prior to the Forest Lake-Rochester Patriots winners' bracket semifinal.

Edina first baseman Pat Donohue recalled the early fall night in Fargo, N.D. when Edina rallied for two runs in the top of the ninth inning to beat defending champion Boyertown, Pa. 5-4.

Donohue delivered the winning hit, a single to the opposite field.

"I remember the whole sequence," said Donohue. He had to wait 40 minutes before he got his chance to hit because two Boyertown players were injured by a collision between the shortstop and an outfielder.

"We took the lead, and then Boyertown had runners at first and third with no one out in the bottom of the ninth," said Donohue. "Wass [pitcher Rob Wassenaar] bulled his neck and took them down. It was crazy – so shocking. We were wondering, did we really do this?"

Rob Wassenaar, who pitched the championship game, said, "We had a great team with a lot of pitching. I was gone for two weeks in June, playing in the National Sports Festival, and that gave some of the other guys a chance to pitch for the Legion team."

"Guys like Pat Egan, Tommy Bjork and Brian Martinson didn't get much of a chance during the high school season," said head coach Bruce Barron. "But with Wass gone and

Rick Raether too old to play Legion ball, they had their chance and made the most of it."

Mike Halloran, Edina's catcher for the World Series team, said, "We had a lot of great games in 1983. "Wass wasn't difficult to catch because he had great control. In big games he was a real bulldog. And he was one of the smartest players I ever played with."

For the high school and American Legion seasons, Wassenaar was perfect with a 21-0 record. And, oh by the way, he went on to win a College World Series title with Stanford University. He also played pro baseball in the Twins organization.

"Being here tonight brings back so many great memories," said Wassenaar, who played high school and Legion ball at Braemar Park. "There's nothing like playing in the American Legion World Series. Our success was a complete team effort."

Hansen has a blast in Excelsior's victory

By John Sherman

Home runs have not been plentiful in Minnesota American Legion Baseball this summer, and at the same time grand slam homers are on the verge of extinction.

To hit a grand slam homer, you first of all need three teammates on base. Then, you have to get your pitch. Finally, you need to put the

barrel on the ball and drive it.

Those elements all came together for Excelsior's Bjorn Hansen during an 8-6 victory over Grand Rapids in a losers' bracket game Saturday at Edina's Braemar Park.

Hansen came to bat in the top of the fourth inning with his team trailing 5-1. Teammates Luke Pettersen, Alex Laporte and Jared Ridge

stood poised on the base paths, hoping to move up.

As it turned out they moved in unison when Hansen drove the ball over the left-field fence.

"I hit an inside fastball, which is exactly what I wanted," said Hansen, who hits in the clean-up spot.

Once a team drops into the losers' bracket, Hansen said it becomes a different ballgame.

"You just try to get as many runners across the plate as you can," he said.

His Excelsior teammate Aaron Kubal had the same mindset against Grand Rapids. Kubal went three-for-five and scored two runs as the Fire Club improved to 34-9.

Excelsior's season ended in the next game as Edina's ace left-hander Matthew Hopfner putt the cuffs on Fire Club hitters.

Excelsior coach Rob Hager had another fine season that included a championship at the Firecracker Invitational in Spokane, Washington.

Eden Prairie wins both ways

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Burnsville. Luke Lind, who hit a two-run homer earlier in the contest, drove in the winning run with a sacrifice fly.

Eden Prairie had a shaky third inning with five fielding errors, but overcame that with solid hitting later in the contest.

"We had mental errors that led to physical errors," said EP head coach Scott Hackett. "But we didn't hang our heads, and after that we got back to the way we have been playing. It

helped when Luke [Lind] hit that two-run bomb."

Eden Prairie has a 30-12 record going into the winners' bracket final against Forest Lake (23-7) at 7 p.m. Sunday at Edina's Braemar Park.

Forest Lake advanced Saturday night with 16-4 victory over the Rochester Patriots. Winning pitcher Jack Schmidt led Forest Lake. In addition to pitching an eight-hitter, he went four-for-five. Alex Egle added three hits.

Game summaries, day two

Game 17

St. Cloud 003 100 000 4 11 1

Alexandria 000 000 010 1 8 0

Schramel and Imholte. Knoblach, Thompson (8) and P. Leary. WP Schramel. LP Knoblach.

Brian Minks led the St. Cloud Chutes with three hits, while teammates Brady Yoerg, Waylon Bemboom and Thomas Imholte each had two hits. Winning pitcher Logan Schramel scattered eight hits in his complete-game victory. Toby Helgeson had three hits for Alexandria.

Game 18

Mahtomedi 000 002 003 5 12 1

Eastview 000 020 210 6 11 2

Baumgard, Goodwin (11) and Erickson. Heisler, Strey (9) and Hebig. WP Strey. LP Goodwin.

Winning pitcher Patrick Strey had a big game for Eastview. In addition to earning the win in relief, he led the Lightning's attack with three hits. Cameron Hall and Derek Schiebel had two hits each for Eastview. Mike Baumann, Tyler Erickson, Michael Claude and Colin Baumgard each had two hits for Mahtomedi, which finished the season 23-12.

Game 19

Excelsior 000 510 001 8 11 2

Grand Rapids 023 000 010 6 11 2

Fahlsing, Branson (4) and Cote. G. Carlisle, Hammann (6) and Frazier. WP Branson. LP G. Carlisle. Home run: Bjorn Hansen, Excelsior.

Grand Rapids jumped to an early 5-0 lead, but Excelsior jumped back in the mix on a grand slam homer by Bjorn Hansen in the top of the fourth inning. Aaron Kubal had three hits for the Fire Club, while Hansen and Tommy Hoopes each had two hits. Zach Frazier of Grand Rapids had a three-for-four day. Grand Rapids finished the season 26-7.

Game 20

Osseo 100 000 002 3 8 2

Edina 000 224 00x 8 12 0

Hohenstein, Williams (6) and Cronin. Fisher, Doran (7) and Michael Grove. WP Fisher. LP Hohenstein.

Edina left-hander Geoff Fisher handcuffed Osseo, holding the Orioles to only four hits in six innings. Reliever Joe Doran finished the job as Edina improved to 27-8. Danny Baer and Mark Handberg led Edina's attack with three hits each. Center fielder Bryce Sealock led Osseo with three hits. Osseo finished the season 21-13.

Game 21

Eastview 532 001 1 12 15 0

St. Cloud 000 000 0 0 0 4

Wobschall, Bechstein (4), Voss (6) and McDevitt. Austing, Braegelmann (2), Auger (4) and Imholte. WP Bechstein. LP Austing.

Three Eastview pitchers combined to throw a no-hitter against the St. Cloud Chutes.

Ryan Heisler went three-for-three to lead the Lightning attack, while Cameron Hall also had three hits.

Game 22

Excelsior 000 000 000 0 6 2

Edina 001 010 040 6 8 2

Ridge, Amundson (7) and Cote. Hopfner and Michael Grove. WP Hopfner. LP Ridge.

Matthew Hopfner pitched Edina to a 6-0 win over the Excelsior Fire Club in a battle of South Hennepin League opponents. Danny Baer and Mitch Larson each had two hits for Edina. Griffin Powell led Excelsior with two hits. The Fire Club finished 34-10 overall.

Game 23

Eden Prairie 031 100 020 001 8 12 6

Burnsville 004 000 300 000 7 11 1

Binger, Phillips (7), Choles (9) and Graen. Smith, Pruszinske (8), Vermeer (9) and Traetow. WP Choles. LP Vermeer.

Luke Lind scored Michael Blauert with a sacrifice fly in the top of the 12th inning to boost Eden Prairie to an 8-7 victory over the Burnsville Cobras. Lind and Drew Miller hit home runs for the winners. Tyler Hanson led Burnsville with three hits.

Game 24

Forest Lake 006 206 2 16 18 0

Rochester Patriots 011 020 0 4 8 4

Schmidt and Fandel. Halverson, Broman (4), Miller (6), Boysen (7) and Brady. WP Schmidt. LP Halverson.

Forest Lake rolled into the winners' bracket finals behind the sterling all-around play of Jack Schmidt. He pitched a complete game for the win and went four-for-five. Alex Egle had three hits for the winners, while Dylan Dresel, Noah Brown, Phil Sauer and Skyler Winning each had two. Zach Schwieters and Sam Aakre led the Patriots with two hits each.