



American Legion Minnesota Division I Tournament

Gazette



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Monday, Aug. 5, 2013

Eden Prairie, Forest Lake, Burnsville play on

Perennial American Legion power Eden Prairie breezed into the final game of the Division I Tournament Sunday night, defeating previously undefeated Forest Lake 12-2.

The Eagles will now face the winner of the Forest Lake and Burnsville game earlier on Monday at Braemar Park.

Eden Prairie has assured itself of being one of the two teams Minnesota will send to the Central Plains Region in Fargo, N.D., later this week.

The other team that advances will be the

winner of the 10 a.m. game.

In earlier action, Edina defeated the Rochester Patriots 7-4 and Burnsville topped Eastview 12-9.

Burnsville then faced off against host Edina, last year's state champion, and came up a 2-0 winner.

Eden Prairie, last year's runner up, has advanced to nine of the last 10 regionals. In that span, they also have won six state titles and one national championship.

The final game at 1 p.m. will be followed

immediately by an awards presentation.

In the Division II Tournament being held at Bird Island, La Crescent topped Morris 4-3 for the state championship. Providence Academy beat Taconite 10-6 for the third place trophy. And Winnebago/ Blue Earth defeated host Bird Island/ Olivia 3-0 for the consolation title.

The outstanding player of the tournament was Ryan Tapani of Providence Academy, son of former Minnesota Twins pitcher Kevin Tapani. Two teams will advance to Pratt, Kansas.

Burnsville finds enough pitching

By John Sherman

Burnsville's ace pitcher Bo Hellquist has been confined to first base duty by tendinitis in his elbow for the State Tournament.

But in Hellquist's absence, the Cobras have still found enough pitching to play in Monday's "Final Three" at Braemar Park.

Peter Nordgren pitched the first seven innings during 2-0 shutout victory over Edina

Sunday afternoon. Reliever Cooper Maas finished off the four-hitter.

"We don't rely on just three arms," said Burnsville head coach Greg Nesbitt after the game. "We use the analogy that we're having dinner, and everyone has to bring something."

Nordgren has not pitched on Legion all year, although he did log some innings with

Continued on Page 2



Burnsville's Cooper Maas

Edina host committee sets high bar for future

By John Sherman

How many volunteers does it take to put on a State American Legion Baseball Tournament?

If you're Edina the answer is 280.

"You have to have a lot of help," said tournament co-director Chan Handberg, the father of Edina first baseman Mark Handberg. "We want the week to be an event, not just a tournament."

When co-director Brad Burley found out that Edina would be awarded the 2013 State

Continued on Page 2

*** Stars of the Day***

Zach Smith, Burnsville's right fielder, went three-for-four and scored three runs in the Cobras' 12-9 over Eastview Sunday morning at Edina's Braemar Park.

Derek Schiebel of Eastview hit two doubles and a single in five at-bats during his team's 12-9 loss to Burnsville.

Peter Nordgren of Burnsville pitched seven innings of shutout ball and went three-for-three at the plate in the Cobras' 2-0 victory over Edina.

Mark Handberg of Edina had the only extra-base hit of the game in his team's 2-0 loss to Burnsville. He hit a one-out double in the top of the ninth inning. In an earlier

7-4 victory over Rochester, he hit a single and a double.

Danny Baer, the Edina center fielder, had a two-RBI double in the top of the ninth as his team scored a 7-4 victory over the Rochester Patriots.

Jack Claeys, Eden Prairie's designated hitter, went four-for-five as the Eagles 10-runned Forest Lake 12-2 in the winners' bracket final Sunday evening.

Corey Binger had a three-for-four night and drove in two runs in Eden Prairie's 12-2 victory over Forest Lake.

Miles Nablo of Eden Prairie pitched a five-hitter to beat Forest Lake 12-2.

Over 280 volunteers make it work

Continued from Page 1

Legion Tournament, he immediately put the focus on the veterans who make up the membership of the American Legion.

"First and foremost, our goal is to honor the veterans," said Burley, whose dad, World War II veteran Bob Burley, 89, threw out the first pitch at opening ceremonies Thursday, Aug. 1, at Braemar Park.

Bob showed he still has some game, and he delivered a strike to his grandson Patrick, the catcher.

Another highlight of the opening ceremonies was a military flyover, which featured four T-6 Texan planes that were used to train pilots during World War II.

Edina's innovation for the 2013 State Tournament impressed fans, players and the American Legion's officers, including State Baseball Director Mike Perry.

"You talk about a yeoman effort in terms of organization, work and logistics," said Perry. "The host committee has done an outstanding job. Edina is one of the best hosts the State Tournament has had."

Perry was touched by the opening ceremonies, especially the flyover.

"The opening ceremonies were four runs over the top," he said. "The host committee told us what they would do, and they did it. The planes, which were coming from Wisconsin, made their first pass over the field at exactly 2:50."

"The program exceeded my expectations," said Chan Handberg. "Brad, John Labosky and I came up with the idea of opening ceremonies. It was John's idea to bring in the T-6 planes and Brad's idea to have a Home Run Derby. I put the program together."

"Edina put a high emphasis on veterans



Tournament directors Brad Burley, Chan Handberg and John Labosky worked with a crew of 280 volunteers to put on this year's tournament.

and put the military component front and center," said Perry. "They even had reserved parking spots for veterans."

Patriotism was in the air throughout the tournament.

"I've seen more American Flags here than I've seen at some Flag Day events," said Perry.

One of the highlights of tournament week was the Home Run Derby, which featured one player from each of the 16 teams. Dylan Dresel of Forest Lake won the contest by knocking 13 balls over the fence. Tyler Hanson of Burnsville was second with 12 and Luke Lind of Eden Prairie finished third with 10. Lind had the longest homer, which was measured at 390 feet.

Burley and Handberg agreed that the volunteer effort for the State Tournament was amazing.

"Recruiting volunteers is like shaking hands and kissing babies," said Burley. "So many people have helped - not only Edina people, but also people at our co-host sites, Chanhassen, Eden Prairie and Richfield."

Handberg said the key to running a successful State Tournament is advance planning.

"Our primary committee was 25 deep," he noted. "We have been meeting for two years, and that made all the difference. The tournament has been as perfect as could be, starting with the tournament banquet. Patty Burley, Brad's wife, did a phenomenal job with the banquet. Brad, John and I have been all smiles during the event."

Handberg said he was impressed by the quality of the young men, who represented the 16 teams during the tournament.

"During the flyover and the National Anthem, they stood at attention and didn't move their caps [from over their hearts]," said Handberg. "One of the goals of the tournament was to give them a good experience. Another goal was to help them understand why we are able to have a tournament like this, and that's because of the sacrifices our veterans and people currently in the Armed Services have made."

When Handberg and Burley arrived at Braemar at 7 a.m. Sunday morning, they took a couple minutes to drink it all in.

"I looked at Brad and said, 'I don't want this to end,'" said Handberg.

Burnsville

Continued from Page 1

another Burnsville traveling team this summer.

"We scrapped Peter's curve in the bullpen before the game and had him throw the slider instead," said Nesbitt.

"I was a little bit nervous because this was my first time pitching at this level," said Nordgren. "We were kind of running low on arms, and I wanted to help the team."

Nesbitt didn't expect the right-hander would throw a shutout, but he was very pleased with the result of his decision to start Nordgren.

Maas has been limited lately due to arm problems of his own, but he brought the heat Saturday.

"The adrenaline was rushing," he said.



Burnsville Coach Greg Nesbitt hugs Bo Hellquist after a 2-0 win over Edina.

Complete Stats for the tournament

Batting avg

1. Brian Minks-CHUTES	.714
2. Drew Sjostrand-GRAPIDS	.667
3. Keaton Studsrud-CB	.636
4. Corey Binger-EDENPRAI	.600
5. Luke Lind-EDENPRAI	.571
6. Colin Baumgard-MAHTOMED	.545
Zach Smith-BVILLE	.545
Hunter Shepard-GRAPIDS	.545
9. Derek Schiebel-EASTVIEW	.500
Ben Allen-ALEX	.500

Runs scored

1. Cameron Hall-EASTVIEW	8
2. Ryan Heisler-EASTVIEW	7
Luke Lind-EDENPRAI	7
4. Cody Wetmore-EDENPRAI	6
Michael Blauert-EDENPRAI	6
Drew Miller-EDENPRAI	6
Ben Sherman-BVILLE	6
Reid Holum-GRAPIDS	6
9. 6 tied at ...	5

Doubles

1. Cameron Hall-EASTVIEW	5
2. Danny Baer-EDINA	4
Zach Frazier-GRAPIDS	4
Grant Carlisle-GRAPIDS	4
5. Brian Minks-CHUTES	3
Bjorn Hansen-XCELSIOR	3
Alex Egle-FLAKE	3
8. 14 tied at ...	2

Total bases

1. Luke Lind-EDENPRAI	18
2. Derek Schiebel-EASTVIEW	16
3. Cameron Hall-EASTVIEW	15
Brian Minks-CHUTES	15
Bjorn Hansen-XCELSIOR	15
6. Patrick Strey-EASTVIEW	13
Danny Baer-EDINA	13
8. Drew Miller-EDENPRAI	11
9. 4 tied at ...	10

Sac bunts

1. Kevin Wobschall-EASTVIEW	5
2. Jake Halverson-ROCHPATS	3
3. Mark Gasner-EDENPRAI	2
Hunter Shepard-GRAPIDS	2
Alex LaPorte-XCELSIOR	2
Jacob Dravis-ROCHPATS	2
Jack Graen-EDENPRAI	2
8. 33 tied at ...	1

Slugging pct

1. Luke Lind-EDENPRAI	1.286
2. Brian Minks-CHUTES	1.071
3. Bjorn Hansen-XCELSIOR	.938
4. Grant Carlisle-GRAPIDS	.818
5. Zach Frazier-GRAPIDS	.769
6. Keaton Studsrud-CB	.727
7. Cameron Hall-EASTVIEW	.682
8. Derek Schiebel-EASTVIEW	.667
Chris Landis-CB	.667
Drew Sjostrand-GRAPIDS	.667

Hits

1. Patrick Strey-EASTVIEW	12
Derek Schiebel-EASTVIEW	12
3. Brian Minks-CHUTES	10
4. Danny Baer-EDINA	9
Rhett Hebig-EASTVIEW	9
Ryan Heisler-EASTVIEW	9
7. 5 tied at ...	8

Triples

1. Bo Hellquist-BVILLE	1
Cameron Hall-EASTVIEW	1
Brandon Goodwin-MAHTOMED	1
Alex Brady-ROCHPATS	1
Derek Schiebel-EASTVIEW	1
Luke Lind-EDENPRAI	1
Jack Claeys-EDENPRAI	1
Brian Minks-CHUTES	1
Andy Carlisle-GRAPIDS	1

Walks

1. Michael Grove-EDINA	7
2. Brett Moody-OSSEO	5
Tyler Hill-BVILLE	5
Ben Sherman-BVILLE	5
5. 8 tied at ...	4

Sac flies

1. Tyler Hill-BVILLE	2
2. 17 tied at ...	1

On base pct

1. Drew Sjostrand-GRAPIDS	.750
2. Brian Minks-CHUTES	.733
3. Keaton Studsrud-CB	.636
4. Hunter Shepard-GRAPIDS	.615
Colin Baumgard-MAHTOMED	.615
Corey Binger-EDENPRAI	.615
7. Luke Lind-EDENPRAI	.611
8. Austin Athmann-CLDSPRNG	.600
Blake Holbrook-CLDSPRNG	.600
10. Zach Smith-BVILLE	.583

Runs batted in

1. Luke Lind-EDENPRAI	8
2. Cameron Hall-EASTVIEW	7
Bjorn Hansen-XCELSIOR	7
4. Cole McDevitt-EASTVIEW	6
Drew Miller-EDENPRAI	6
Billy Hammann-GRAPIDS	6
Tyler Hill-BVILLE	6
8. 5 tied at ...	5

Home runs

1. Luke Lind-EDENPRAI	2
Bjorn Hansen-XCELSIOR	2
3. Waylon Bemboom-CHUTES	1
Drew Miller-EDENPRAI	1
Kent Curran-EDENPRAI	1

Hit by pitch

1. Tyler Hanson-BVILLE	3
Blake Holbrook-CLDSPRNG	3
3. Cody Wetmore-EDENPRAI	2
Ryan Heisler-EASTVIEW	2
Spencer Egly-EDINA	2
Luke Lind-EDENPRAI	2
Alex Brady-ROCHPATS	2
Griffin Powell-XCELSIOR	2
9. 36 tied at ...	1

Stolen bases

1. Blake Holbrook-CLDSPRNG	3
Derek Schiebel-EASTVIEW	3
3. 10 tied at ...	2

Game summaries, day three

Game 25

Burnsville 110 060 310 12 16 0
Eastview 115 001 100 9 15 4

L. Hansen, Pruszinske (3), Rozek (7) and Traetow. Wobschall, Frederickson (5), Voss (5), Strey (7) and Hebig. WP Pruszinske. LP Voss.

In a game that featured 31 hits, Burnsville outlasted Eastview 12-9 Sunday morning at Edina's Braemar Park. Brennan Pruszinske, the second of two Burnsville pitchers, got credit for the win. Ben Sherman and Zach Smith each had three hits for Burnsville. Patrick Strey had three hits for Eastview, which finished the season with a 28-9 record.

Game 26

Edina 031 010 002 7 10 2
Rochester 200 020 002 4 8 2

Matt Grove, Doran (5) and Michael Grove. Schwieters, Kall (4), Moen (7) and Brady. WP Doran. LP Schwieters.

Edina stayed alive in the losers' bracket in a close game with the Rochester Patriots.

Reliever Joe Doran picked up the win for Edina after starter Matt Grove put Edina in position with 4 and 2/3 solid innings. Mark Handberg and Harrisen Egly led Edina's offense with two hits each. Jake Halverson had three hits for Rochester, which finished 22-13.

Game 27

Edina 000 000 000 0 4 1
Burnsville 110 000 00x 2 8 0

Fisher, H. Egly (7) and Michael Grove. Nordgren, Maas (8) and Traetow. WP Nordgren. LP Fisher.

In a well-pitched game Sunday afternoon at Braemar Park, Burnsville's Peter Nordgren went seven innings to record the win. Cooper Maas completed the four-hitter and earned a save. Geoff Fisher and Harrisen Egly pitched well in a losing cause for Edina, allowing eight hits. The only extra-base hit of the game was a double by Edina first baseman Mark Handberg in the ninth inning. The contest lasted an hour and 49 minutes. Edina finished the season 29-9.

Game 28

Forest Lake 000 020 00 2 5 2
Eden Prairie 010 500 06 12 13 1

Wassman, Gravelle (4) and Fandel. Nablo and Graen. WP Nablo. LP Wassman.

Jack Claeys had four hits including a triple as Eden Prairie rolled to a 12-2 victory over Eden Prairie Sunday evening at Braemar Park. Corey Binger added three hits for the winners. Forest Lake's Phil Sauer had two hits.

Perry: Sub-state format feedback is positive

By John Sherman

One of the most significant changes in the history of Minnesota American Legion Baseball involved changing the playoff format for the 2013 season.

In the past, teams advanced to the State Tournament through one of 10 District Tournaments. The format change this year was significant in that 15 Sub-State Tournaments replaced the 10 District playoffs. At the same time, the Sub-States are winner-take-all tournaments with only the champion advancing. Under the old format, second- and even third-place teams sometimes qualified for State.

Now the State Tournament is a tournament for champions only.

Minnesota American Legion Baseball Director Mike Perry said he is pleased with the results.

"Geography was the main ingredient in determining the Sub-Sections," he explained. "We have approximately 135 Division I Legion teams in the state, which means there are nine teams in most of the Sub-Sections."

"To me, moving to the Sub-State format was great," Perry continued. "Obviously, there will be a few tweaks in the system, but from a competitive standpoint, it went very well. Nine of the 15 Sub-State Tournaments went to the if-

necessary game. Another was decided by a walk-off homer in the bottom of the 13th inning. And three other games were decided in the last at-bat."

Minnesota Junior Legion Baseball Director Jim Peck agreed with Perry's assessment.

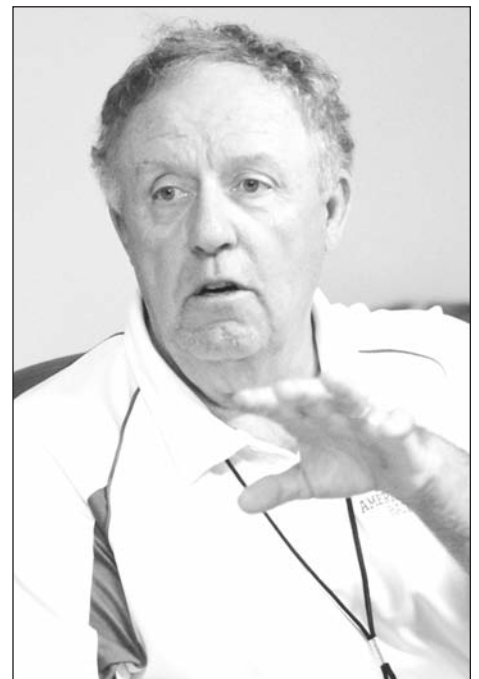
"I am big on equity," said Peck. "From my perspective, the new format is logical and practical. We should have gone to this format a while ago, but it takes time to make a change like this."

A good mix of teams emerged from the Sub-State Tournaments. There are nine Twin Cities Metro teams in the State Tournament, including the host team, Edina.

Grand Rapids represents Northeast Minnesota, Alexandria represents Western Minnesota, New Ulm represents South Central Minnesota and the Rochester Patriots represent Southeast Minnesota. Cold Spring, the St. Cloud Chutes and St. Francis represent Central Minnesota.

The Metro teams are Burnsville, Chester Bird (Golden Valley), Eastview, Eden Prairie, Edina, Excelsior, Forest Lake, Mahtomedi and Osseo.

Certainly, the Sub-State format has brought a good mix of teams to the State Tournament, and that was one of the objectives.



State Baseball Director Mike Perry said the new sub-state playoff system has worked well in its initial year.