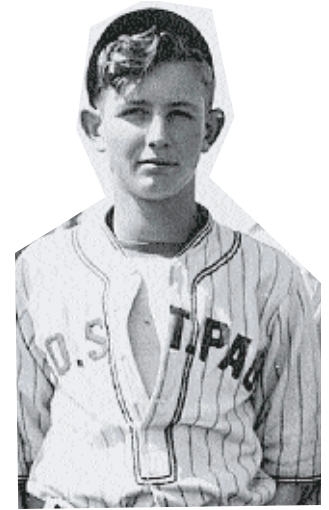




# American Legion Minnesota Division I Tournament

# Gazette



Volume 18, No. 2

Eagan, Minn.

Saturday, Aug. 2, 2014

## 12 still playing as tourney enters second day

In an eventful first day of the Minnesota American Legion Division I Baseball Tournament, 12 teams are still chasing the prize.

Four teams lost both their games on Friday in the double-elimination tournament. St. Francis, Burnsville, Hamline Purple, and Delano went home.

Lightning caused the Eagan-Champlin game at Eagan to be halted twice and eventually suspended.

The four unbeaten teams that advanced into

Saturday's second round were Excelsior, Hutchinson, Lakeville North, and the winner of the suspended game.

Seven other teams with 1-1 records will try and fight their way back through the losers' bracket. They are: Rochester Redhawks, Tri-City Red, Chaska, New Ulm Gold, Nisswa, Alexandria, St. Cloud Chutes. They will be joined by the loser of the suspended game.

Games will be played at three fields on Saturday. The two winners' bracket games will be played at Eagan Varsity Field at 2 and 5 p.m.

while losers' bracket games will be played at Eagan, Red Haddock Field and Alimagnet Park.

Play will continue through Monday with the semi-final game at 10 and the championship game at 1 p.m. Two teams will advance to the Legion regional tournament.

Meanwhile, in Luverne, the single-elimination Division II Tournament got underway.

Plato beat Dilworth 5-3, Foley edged Osakis 2-1, St. James topped International Falls 1-0, and Luverne beat LaCrescent 5-2. The tourney goes through Sunday



Jeff Fasching of the St. Cloud Chutes tries to scamper back to first base but too late as Champlin first baseman Eric Pearson retrieved an errant throw and beat him to the bag. Second baseman Noah Bouley, right, also converged.

## Lightning causes suspended game

By John Sherman

When lightning strikes anywhere near a Legion ball field, State Director Mike Perry tells coaches, managers and umpires to err on the side of caution.

A long lightning bolt was prominent in the eastern skies during the final game of the day at Eagan High School Friday, and the teams from Eagan and Champlin Park were taken off of the field by the umpires in the fourth inning with Eagan leading 4-1.

A 30-minute delay followed before Perry and other officials at the site decided it was safe to resume play.

"Even though it looked like the lightning was somewhere near Green Bay, you have to be very careful," said Perry.

When play resumed at 7:48 p.m., Champlin Park scored to make the score 4-2. The game was suspended due to darkness in the top of the fifth inning shortly before 8:35.

"The loser of the Eagan-Champlin Park game is scheduled to play at 10 a.m. Saturday at Red Haddock Field in Bloomington," said

Continued on Page 2

# Excelsior Legion team makes all the plays

By John Sherman

One reason for Excelsior's No. 1 ranking in the state American Legion Baseball is depth.

Third baseman Kyle Hoffman is not the player with the highest profile, but he sure was valuable in the first round of the State Tournament as Excelsior outlasted an upset-minded Burnsville team 5-4.

In the bottom of the sixth, with Excelsior trailing 4-2, Griffin Powell was hit by a pitch. With one out, Derek Branson singled, and then Hoffman singled home a run. Branson scored on a wild pitch to tie the score. 4-4. Hoffman scored the go-ahead run on Aaron Kubal's sacrifice fly.

"We haven't had to come from behind very often," said Hoffman after the game. "I was down two strikes, and I thought he [Burnsville pitcher Zach Smith] would throw me a curveball. I watched it all the way and made contact."

While he is capable clutch hitter, Hoffman's forte is defense.

"Kyle makes all the routine plays," said Excelsior head coach Rob Hager. "And he also makes a lot of plays other third baseman couldn't make. He's the best third baseman I have seen at this level, certainly the best one I've coached."

"Kyle is a very quiet competitor, but one of the strongest competitors on the field."

Hager said that defense was the key to Excelsior's first-round win. Branson, the center



Excelsior Coach Rob Hager contemplates strategy during the Excelsior-Burnsville game.

fielder, ran down a long shot to the left-center gap to end the game.

"In the State Tournament, we don't expect to see anyone lay down for us," said Hager. "I expected a dogfight with Burnsville. Luckily, we had guys coming through at the right time."

Branson, the Sub-State 4 MVP, said, "This win shows that we're capable of battling back

against a good team. We never got down on ourselves."

Starting pitcher Brian Wold gave Excelsior seven innings before turning the ball over to Connor Oestreich, who recorded the save. Wold's record is 11-0 and he has a miniscule 0.39 ERA.

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

**Kyle Hoffman**, Excelsior's third baseman, made big plays in the field and keyed a three-run, sixth-inning rally in his team's 5-4 victory over . Hoffman drove in a run in the sixth and then scored the eventual winning run on Aaron Kubal's sacrifice fly.

**Tanner Kluis**, the designated hitter for New Ulm Gold, had four hits, including a triple, during a 6-4 victory over Chaska.

**Brandon Rushmeyer** pitched a six-hit shutout as the Champlin Park Rebels rolled to an 11-0 first-round victory over the St. Cloud Chutes.

**Jake Mackovets**, the left fielder for , had three hits in his team's 7-2 win over St. Francis.

**Zach Robertson's** three-run homer was the catalyst as the Rochester Redhawks downed Tri-City Red 7-5 in a first-round game.

**Fernando Villegas** clubbed a 380-foot home run in the first inning to give a great start in a 16-3 win over Hamline Purple. He finished the game with five RBI.

**Jayden Juergens** starred in Hutchinson's 16-3 win over Hamline Purple. He was the winning pitcher and also had a good offensive game with two hits and two runs scored.

**Jake Ossell** of Eagan had a two-RBI sin-

gle to give Eagan a 4-2 lead in a suspended game with Champlin Park. Play was halted by darkness in the fifth inning.

**Mitchell Kurth** of Hutchinson had a monster game in his team's 10-6 comeback victory over New Ulm Gold. He went four-for-five with three RBI.

**Billy Riach** of Lakeville North pitched a complete game Friday night as his team handed Nisswa an 8-2 loss.

**Brad Mathiowetz** of the Rochester Redhawks blasted a home run in the first inning on the way to a three-for-four performance in a 14-7 loss to the Excelsior Fire Club.

**Derek Branson** pitched the win and also had a big night at the plate in Excelsior's 14-7 win over the Rochester Redhawks. Branson's offensive line included two hits in four at-bats with two runs scored and two RBI.

**Griffin Powell**, Excelsior's left fielder, went two-for-three with three runs scored and two RBI in a 14-7 Fire Club victory over the Rochester Redhawks. It was Excelsior's 50th win of the season.

**Drew Stewart** of Lakeville North had three hits in an 8-2 victory over Nisswa on Friday night.

## Suspended game

Continued from Page 1

Perry. "We decided the perfect solution would be to resume the Eagan-Champlin Park game at 8:30 a.m. at Red Haddox, and the site manager, Ron Nenovich, will have things ready to go. When that game is completed, the loser will play in the 10 a.m. game. Red Haddox Field has lights and does not have a curfew. But we should be able to get back on schedule."

Perry said he had to make several calls to other coaches who are scheduled to play later in the day at Red Haddox.

"I told them they should check with me in case there is a delay," the State Director said.

For the teams involved in the suspended game, Eagan and Champlin Park, the restart raises strategic issues.

Will the teams come back with Friday's starters, Kevin Inman for Eagan and Trevor Kiminski for Champlin Park? Or will they rest them and opt for new pitchers?

American Legion Baseball rules allow pitchers 12 innings over a three-day span, and there is also a limit of four appearances in three days.

Perry and the local committee members from Eagan hope the State Tournament will go on both rain-free and lightning-free, but if there is inclement weather, Perry promises he will make decisions based on the safety of the ballplayers.

## Game summaries for the opening day

### Game 1

Burnsville 040 000 000 4 8 1  
Excelsior 200 003 00x 5 8 2

Z. Smith and Traetow. Wold, Oestreich (8) and . WP Wold. LP Z. Smith.

Excelsior had a come-from-behind win in the first game of the State Tournament at the Bloomington site. The Fire Club scored three runs in the bottom of the sixth to take a one-run lead. Kyle Hoffman had an RBI single and Derek Branson scored the tying run on a wild pitch. Hoffman then scored the eventual winning run on Aaron Kubal's sacrifice fly. Brian Wold was the winning pitcher for the Fire Club and teammate Connor Oestreich got the save.

### Game 2

Tri-City Red 000 000 230 5 13 4  
Rochester Redhawks 003 001 03x 7 8 1

B. Lovdahl, (8) and Meyer. Douglas, T. Hanson (7) and Mathiowetz. WP Douglas. LP B. Lovdahl. Home Run: Robertson, Redhawks.

Despite being outthit 13-8, the Rochester Redhawks eased past Tri-City Red in a first-round State Tournament game. Zach Robertson's three-run homer was the equalizer for the Redhawks. Catcher Brad Mathiowetz had three hits for the Redhawks.

### Game 3

New Gold 000 006 000 6 13 0  
Chaska 102 000 001 4 6 1

Meyer, Dittrich (9) and Kannegeisser. Sweeney, Kjolsing (6), Yarger (8) and Roskam. WP Meyer. LP Kjolsing.

Designated hitter Tanner Kluis had a huge game in New Ulm Gold's 6-4 first-round win over Chaska. Kluis went four-for-five with a triple and three singles. Teammate Grant Kannegeiser had three hits and New Ulm Gold pitcher Chase Meyer recorded the win. It was a tough loss for Chaska, which held New Ulm Gold scoreless in every inning except for the sixth.

### Game 4

Hutchinson 323 710 0 16 19 2  
Hamline Purple 100 002 0 3 7 2

Juergens, Fleck (7) and Villegas. Gnetz, Wingard (4), Bird (4) and Rued. WP Juergens. LP Gnetz. Home Run: Villegas, Hutchinson.

Catcher Fernando Villegas hit a three-run homer in the first inning to get off to a good start in its first-round game with Hamline Purple, a team representing . Jake Arlt and Mitchell Kurth hit doubles for . Winning pitcher Jayden Juergens helped his own cause with two hits. Dan Odlag had three hits for Hamline Purple.

### Game 5

Nisswa 021 020 001 6 11 2  
Delano 000 000 102 3 10 5

Graupmann and Dechaine. Hannan, Maschino (8) and Meyers. WP Graumann. LP Hannan.

Taylor Streiff was the offensive leader for Nisswa. He hit a two-run triple in the second inning and later added two singles. T.J. Graumann pitched a complete game for the win, scattering 10 hits.

### Game 6

Lakeville North 100 500 061 13 14 1  
Alexandria 000 110 020 4 7 5

Sayer, Herber (8) and Jensen. Stockert, Leary (8) and Thompson. WP Sayer. LP Stockert.

Lakeville North's bats came alive in a 13-4 victory over in a first-round game. Winning pitcher A.J. Sayer also had a key role as North's lead-off batter. He was on base four times with two hits and two walks. Nick Oblakl hit a home run for the winners. Drew Stewart had three hits, including a triple.

### Game 7

Champlin Park 001 240 3 11 13 0  
St. Cloud Chutes 000 000 0 0 6 2

Rushmeyer and Bulega. Fasching, Dehler (6) and Imholte. WP Rushmeyer. LP Fasching.

Champlin Park opened the State Tournament with a resounding 11-0 victory over the St. Cloud Chutes. Pitcher Brandon Rushmeyer went the distance on a six-hitter and struck out four. Tim Munn and Trevor Kiminski hit doubles for the Rebels, while teammate Noah Bowley hit two singles and scored twice. Brindley Theisen hit a double for the Chutes.

### Game 8

Eagan 000 021 040 7 10 0  
St. Francis 000 101 000 2 6 3

Cardenas, Ossell (9) and Seipel. Bauermeister, Tholen (7), Jorgenson (8) and Benson. WP Cardenas. LP Bauermeister.

The host team from treated its fans to a 7-2 victory over St. Francis in a first-round game at . Winning pitcher T.J. Cardenas pitched a solid eight innings for the win. Jake Mackovets led the attack with three hits, while teammate Ed Olson added two hits and two RBI. David Jorgenson, Ben Yatkoske and Dom DeJarlais each had two hits for the Fighting Saints.



## Game 9

Burnsville 000 301 002 6 8 1  
Tri-City Red 202 200 01x 7 15 1

Vermeer, Pruzinske (4) and Traeton. DeCaster, Rholl (9) and Meyer. WP DeCaster. LP Vermeer.

Tri-City Red stayed alive in the State Tournament with a 7-6 victory over . Henry DeCaster was the winning pitcher, as he allowed seven hits in eight innings. Charlie Callahan led Tri-City Red's attack with three hits. Wyatt Meyer had two hits and drove in three runs for Tri-City Red. Ryan Plasencia added three hits for the winners. Kyle Federer led with two hits and four RBI. Zach Smith added two hits.

## Game 10

Rochester Redhawks 100 030 300 7 11 5  
Excelsior 204 204 11x 14 10 1

Riles, Campbell (3), Paulson (5), Krause (7) and Brust. Branson, Amundson (8), Fahlsing (9) and . WP Branson. LP Riles. Home Run: Mathiowetz, Redhawks.

Ten Excelsior hits and five Rochester Redhawk errors boosted Excelsior to a 14-7 victory in a winners' bracket game at 's Red Haddock Field. Derek Branson pitched six innings to get the win and also had two hits in the game. Griffin Powell added a pair of hits and scored three runs for the Fire Club. Brad Mathiowetz hit a home run for the Redhawks in the first inning. The win for Excelsior was its 51st of the season against only six losses.

## Game 11

Chaska 330 144 2 17 16 2  
Hamline Purple 000 201 0 3 6 6

Arnett and Gnetz. Rice, Wright (5), Modl (5) and Schmidt. WP Arnett. LP Rice.

Justin Arnold and Derek Arnett each had four RBI for Chaska and Arnett pitched a complete game in the 17-3 win over Hamline Purple. Six Chaska players had at least two hits each.

## Game 12

New Ulm Gold 500 000 010 6 11 4  
Hutchinson 021 022 03x 10 10 3

Kluis, Dewanz (4), Palmer (8) and Kannegeisser. Jordahl and Villegas. WP Jordahl. LP Dewanz.

Mitchell Kurth went four-for-five with three RBI to lead to its second win of the day, 10-6 over New Ulm Gold. Five runs in the first inning by New Ulm Gold put in the hole, but it was only temporary. Paxton Jordahl went the distance on the mound to gain the victory.

## Game 13

Delano 002 003 200 7 9 2  
Alexandria 043 101 20x 11 12 2

Schramel, Koenecke (4), Maschino (8) and Meyer. Thompson, Kuhn (6) and Hammerback. WP Thompson. LP Schramel.

Mitchell Thompson was the winning pitcher as stayed alive in the losers' bracket by topping 11-7. Thompson and his catcher, Casey Hammerback, each had two hits. Toby Hanson hit a triple for .

## Game 14

Lakeville North 001 100 150 8 11 0  
Nisswa 000 110 000 2 9 5

Riach and Jensen. Solid, Bukowski (8) and Casperson. WP Riach. LP Solid.

Lakeville North's Billy Riach pitched a complete game in this winners' bracket game against Nisswa. He struck out six and scattered nine hits. The top offensive player for Lakeville North, Drew Stewart, had a big night with three hits. A.J. Sayer, Ben Jensen and Angelo Altavilla each had two hits for Lakeville North. Mizuki Shumsky and Matt Casperson led Nisswa with two hits apiece.

## Game 15

St. Cloud Chutes 042 100 330 13 17 5  
St. Francis 023 100 000 6 11 7

Theisen, Minks (8) and Auger. Servais, Jorgenson (4), Benson (8) and Bertels. WP Theisen. LP Servais.

In an error-plagued game that also included 28 hits, the St. Cloud Chutes kept their state-championship hopes alive with a 7-5 victory over St. Francis. Tommy Auger, Jeff Fasching, Jake Gross and Steven Neutzling had three hits apiece for the Chutes. Lead-off batter Mitch Benson had three hits for St. Francis. Winning pitcher Brindley Theisen scattered nine hits over seven innings before handing the reins to reliever Brian Minks.

## Game 16

Suspended Until Saturday  
Eagan 001 30 4 6 1  
Champlin Park 010 1x 2 5 1

Inman and Seipel. Kiminski and Balega.

Jake Ossell of had the big hit in the suspended game with a two-run single in the top of the fourth inning. Ed Olson and Thomas Peterson also had RBI for the Wildcats. Tim Munn had two hits and an RBI for Champlin Park and Brandon Rushmeyer also had an RBI.