



American Legion Minnesota Division I Tournament

Gazette



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Excelsior, Lakeville North are unbeatens

Heading into Sunday, Excelsior and Lakeville North are the two teams remaining in the winners' bracket of the Minnesota American Legion Division I Baseball Tournament in Eagan.

Excelsior topped Hutchinson 9-6 and Lakeville North rallied to beat host Eagan 12-7

in Saturday's action.

Fighting their way back in the losers' bracket on Sunday will be Eagan, Hutchinson, Nisswa, and St. Cloud Chutes.

Six teams lost their second game and went home: Chaska, Tri-City Red, Champlin, Rochester Redhawks, New Ulm Gold, and

Alexandria.

Games will be at 11 a.m., and 2 and 5 p.m. Sunday at Eagan Varsity Field, with one game at 11 a.m. at Red Haddock Field in Bloomington.

The game pitting the two unbeatens will be at 2 p.m. at Eagan.

The final two games will be Monday at Eagan with the title game at 1 p.m. Minnesota will send the champion and runner-up to Fargo, N.D. to compete in the regional tournament.

The winner of that eight-team tourney will advance to the American Legion World Series in Shelby, N.C., Aug. 15-19.

In Division II play in Luverne, among the smaller schools in the state, Osakis beat Dilworth 4-3 and International Falls topped LaCrescent 8-4 in consolation play. Okakis won the consolation title by beating I-Falls 6-2.

In championship action, Plato topped Foley 9-1 and St. James beat Luverne 5-1. Plato will take on St. James in Sunday's title game.

Eagan makes mark on tourney

By John Sherman

Prior to the State American Legion Tournament, Eagan was fighting to stay above the .500 mark.

When the State Tournament began Friday, Aug. 1, the host team had an 18-16 record, but wins No. 19 and 20 arrived quickly.

After beating St. Francis 7-2 in a first-round game, Eagan won 9-2 over Champlin Park in the second round.

The Eagan-Champlin Park contest got

underway Friday afternoon at Eagan High School. After the game was interrupted by lightning in the fourth inning, it was finally halted by darkness in the fifth.

The game resumed Saturday morning at Red Haddock Field in Bloomington.

"One obvious decision we had to make was the pitching," said Johnson. "Kevin Inman, who started the game on Friday, threw 65 pitches, and we felt that was too many to bring him

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Slam leads Excelsior over Hutch

By John Sherman

Going into this week's State American Legion Tournament, Excelsior's Connor Oestreich had only one home run this season.

He doubled his production at the most opportune time, slamming a grand-slam homer in the seventh inning of a game against Hutchinson Saturday afternoon at Eagan High School.

His 360-foot shot cleared the Green Monster, Eagan's 40-foot left-field wall, with room to spare. Oestreich was greeted at home plate by the three teammates he knocked home - Kyle Hoffman, Aaron Kubal and Ian Cote.

After that, Oestreich went to work on the pitcher's mound to help the Fire Club win 9-6. It was Excelsior's 52nd win of the season against a mere six losses.

How does Oestreich describe the home run? "He [pitcher Mitchell Kurth] hung a curve right to me," he said. "When I got it up in the air, I figured it had a chance."

And how was it going around the bases?

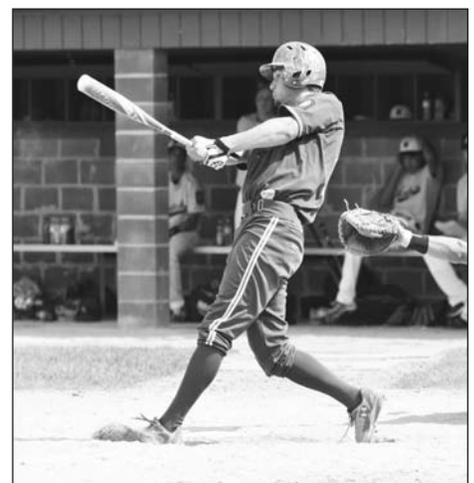
"It was a feeling," he said.

Oestreich said Hutchinson's batting order would be challenging for any Legion pitcher.

"My curve was working today and I dropped a couple change-ups in there, too," he said. "It was important to hit spots against them because when you don't, the ball gets smashed. It was easier for me to lock in and pitch after I hit the home run."

Aaron Kubal and Ian Cote also solved the Green Monster against Hutchinson. They went back-to-back in the bottom of the second.

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Connor Oestreich blasts a grand slam to put Excelsior ahead.

Eagan

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back.”

Johnson chose Jake Ossell to take over, and Ossell held Champlin Park scoreless during the final five innings of the game.

“Jake normally plays second base,” said Johnson. “He is an absolute competitor, who gives a full effort all the time.”

Ossell’s pitching, combined with his hitting, sank Champlin Park. At the plate, Ossell went four-for-six with a run scored and three RBI. Ossell came into the State Tournament as Eagan’s hitting leader with a .337 average. Prior to Saturday’s appearance, he had pitched fewer than 20 innings with a 0-2 record.

Other Wildcats had a hand in the victory. Jake Mackovets and Zach Seipel each had two hits, while teammates Ricky Kamrud, Nathan Kuhn, Ed Olson and Thomas Peterson each had one hit.

“Our energy and enthusiasm are ramped up for the tournament. We are fortunate to have this opportunity,” said Johnson

After losing to Lakeville North 12-7 Saturday evening, Eagan is headed for the losers’ bracket and an 11 a.m. game Sunday at Red Haddock Field in Bloomington.

Johnson had a distinguished playing career with Eagan Legion before he joined the coaching staff. He played in two State Tournaments and his team also qualified for a Legion Regional in Illinois at the end of the 2010 season. Whether he is playing or coaching, Johnson loves the State Tournament atmosphere.

“It is a lot of fun playing here,” he said.



Eagan’s Zach Seipel sits in the dust on home plate as Lakeville North informs the umpire that he may have missed the call.

Lakeville North pounds the ball

By John Sherman

Nick Oblak of Lakeville North is one of several Panther players who is having a great State Tournament. On Friday, he hit his first home run of the season.

In a 12-7 victory over Eagan in the winners’ bracket Saturday, Oblak was on fire, going three-for-four. It was a close game most of the way, and North didn’t really put it away until it

scored four runs in the top of the ninth. Ben Jensen’s two-run single was the key hit.

Brett Herber set Eagan down 1-2-3 in the bottom of the ninth to end the game only a few minutes before darkness fell on Eagan High School’s field.

“Eagan made eight errors and it was still a game,” said Lakeville North head coach Jared Simon. “They’re tough on their home field because they know how to play here.”

“In the State Tournament we have to stay consistent and play our game for nine innings,” Oblak said after the game.

Herber said the key for the Lakeville North pitching staff is “to keep throwing strikes.”

The right-hander did that when he slammed the door on Eagan in the ninth.

“We can’t afford to give any free rides,” he said.

If Lakeville North reaches the championship game, the players are hopeful first-day starter A.J. Sayer will be ready to go.

The direct path to the title game would be a win over Excelsior in the winners’ bracket final at 2 p.m. Sunday at Eagan High.

“We haven’t had the opportunity to play Excelsior this season,” said Oblak. “We know they’re good. We just have to stay grounded.”

Excelsior

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“How many teams get home runs from their seventh, eighth and ninth hitters in a State Tournament game?” asked Excelsior general manager Jim Peck, who was obviously impressed by the production.

Asked if he was more excited about his own home run or Oestreich’s grand slam, Cote said, “The grand slam, because it came at such a big spot in the game.”

Stars of the Day

Jake Ossell of the Eagan Patriots played an outstanding all-around game in a 9-2 victory over Champlin Park. He was the winning pitcher, tossing five scoreless innings in relief of starter Kevin Inman. At the plate, Ossell went four-for-six with three RBI. He had three more hits in a 12-7 loss to Lakeville North Saturday night.

Nic Balega, catcher for the Champlin Park Rebels, went two-for-four with two runs scored in a 9-2 loss to Eagan.

Taylor Streiff of Nisswa belted two doubles and a home run in a 10-5 victory over Tri-City Red.

Charlie Callahan of Tri-City Red went four-for-five in his team’s season-ending 10-5 loss to Nisswa.

Luke Roskam pitched a complete game and had two hits himself in Chaska’s 13-2 victory over Champlin Park.

Carter Schmidt of Chaska led the way at the plate with a three-for-four day in a 13-2 win over the Champlin Park Rebels.

Travis Krueger of Alexandria went three-for-four in a 10-7 win over the Rochester Redhawks.

Connor Oestreich of the Excelsior Fire Club had his most memorable day as a ballplayer on Saturday during a come-from-behind 9-6 win over Hutchinson. Oestreich hit a grand-slam homer over the Green Monster at Eagan High in the bottom of the sixth inning. He was also the winning pitcher in relief of starter Ryan Helgeson.

Aaron Kubal and Ian Cote of the Excelsior Legion team hit back-to-back homers in the second inning of the Fire Club’s 9-6 victory over Hutchinson.

A.J. Sayer, Lakeville North’s center fielder, went four-for-six and scored two runs in a 12-7 victory over Eagan.

Ben Jensen of Lakeville North went three-for-five with two doubles and a single in a 12-7 victory over Eagan. His two-RBI single in the top of the ninth inning gave the Panthers a four-run cushion.

Steven Neutzling of the St. Cloud Chutes had an extremely productive game in a 21-6 victory over Alexandria. Neutzling went three-for-four with two doubles, a triple and four RBI as the Chutes posted the highest score of the 2014 State Tournament.

Complete stats from tourney's first two days

Batting Average Team

Hutchinson	.377
St. Cloud Chutes	.372
Tri-City Red	.364
Lakeville North	.339
Nisswa	.338
Alexandria	.328
Chaska	.323
Eagan	.304
Excelsior	.292
Champlin	.292

Batting Average Individual

Charlie Callahan, TCRED	.667
Dom DeJarlais, STF	.667
Brad Mathiowetz, ROCHRED	.636
Mizuki Shumsky, NISSWA	.625
Hunter Hart, DELANO	.625
Jake Ossell, EAGAN	.615
Mitchell Kurth, HUTCH	.583
Jeff Fasching, CHUTES	.571
AJ Sayer, LAKENO	.571
Blake Stockert, ALEX	.556

Slugging Percentage

Blake Stockert, ALEX	1.111
Mitchell Kurth, HUTCH	.917
Brad Mathiowetz, ROCHRED	.909
Jeff Fasching, CHUTES	.857
AJ Sayer, LAKENO	.857
Taylor Streiff, NISSWA	.842
Gabe Knowles, NUG	.818
Mizuki Shumsky, NISSWA	.813
Steven Neutzling, CHUTES	.813
Aaron Kubal, EXCLSIOR	.800

On Base Percentage

Dom DeJarlais, STF	.857
Brad Mathiowetz, ROCHRED	.733
Cole Gnetz, PURPLE	.714
Hunter Hart, DELANO	.700
Jake Ossell, EAGAN	.688
Charlie Callahan, TCRED	.667
Jeff Fasching, CHUTES	.667
AJ Sayer, LAKENO	.667
Mizuki Shumsky, NISSWA	.650
Mitchell Kurth, HUTCH	.643

Runs scored

Derek Annett, CHASKA	7
Brian Minks, CHUTES	7
Mitchell Kurth, HUTCH	7
Jake Ossell, EAGAN	6
AJ Sayer, LAKENO	6
Brad Mathiowetz, ROCHRED	6
Tony Kjolsing, CHASKA	6
Steven Neutzling, CHUTES	6
Mizuki Shumsky, NISSWA	6
Taylor Murphy, CHASKA	6

Hits

Mizuki Shumsky, NISSWA	10
Charlie Callahan, TCRED	10
Mitch Thompson, ALEX	9
Carter Schmidt, CHASKA	9
Brian Minks, CHUTES	8
AJ Sayer, LAKENO	8
Jeff Fasching, CHUTES	8

Jake Ossell, EAGAN	8
5 tied at	7

Runs Batted In

Steven Neutzling, CHUTES	9
Carter Schmidt, CHASKA	8
Derek Annett, CHASKA	7
Michael Michalak, ROHRED	7
Taylor Streiff, NISSWA	7
Drew Stewart, LAKENO	6
Wyatt Meyer, TCRED	6
Zach Robertson, ROCHRED	6
Angelo Altavilla, LAKENO	6
Blake Stockert, ALEX	6

Doubles

Mitchell Kurth, HUTCH	4
Ben Jensen, LAKENO	4
AJ Sayer, LAKENO	4
Mizuki Shumsky, NISSWA	3
Steven Neutzling, CHUTES	3
Mitch Thompson, ALEX	3
Drew Sannes, NISSWA	3
18 tied at	2

Triples

Steven Neutzling, CHUTES	2
Taylor Streiff, NISSWA	2
Dominic Austing, CHUTES	2
Jeff Fasching, CHUTES	2
10 tied at	1

Home Runs

11 tied at	1
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Total Bases

Taylor Streiff, NISSWA	16
Mitch Thompson, ALEX	14
Mizuki Shumsky, NISSWA	13
Steven Neutzling, CHUTES	13
Jeff Fasching, CHUTES	12
AJ Sayer, LAKENO	12
Carter Schmidt, CHASKA	11
Mitchell Kurth, HUTCH	11
Charlie Callahan, TCRED	11
5 tied at	10

Walks

Luke Roskam, CHASKA	6
Riley Sweeney, CHASKA	5
Jeff Fasching, CHUTES	4
Blake Stockert, ALEX	4
AJ Sayer, LAKENO	4
Steven Neutzling, CHUTES	4
20 tied at	3

Stolen bases

Thomas Imholte, CHUTES	4
Justin Arnold, CHASKA	3
Taylor Murphy, CHASKA	3
Tony Kjolsing, CHASKA	3
Jake Wendland, HUTCH	3
Ben Mezzenga, TCRED	3
Jake Ossell, EAGAN	3
9 tied at	2

Earned Run Average Team

Lakeville North	3.67
Eagan	4.00
Excelsior	4.33
Chaska	4.35
Nisswa	4.50
St. Francis	5.00
St. Cloud Chutes	5.12
New Ulm Gold	5.19
Hutchinson	5.25
Delano	5.82

Earned Run Average Ind.

Brandon Rushmeyer, CHAM	0.00
Jake Ossell, EAGAN	0.00
Brian McGill, CHAMPLIN	0.00
John Bird, PURPLE	0.00
Dominic Austing, CHUTES	1.12
Luke Roskam, CHASKA	1.29
Connor Oestrich, EXCLSIOR	1.50
Alex Bauermeister, STF	1.50
Brennan Pruszinske, BURNS	1.80
Danny Kuhn, ALEX	1.93

Opposing Bat Avg

Jake Ossell, EAGAN	.143
Chase Meyer, NUG	.167
Connor Oestrich, EXCLSIOR	.174
Jack Wickstrom, CHASKA	.190
Danny Kuhn, ALEX	.190
Hayden Bukowski, NISSWA	.194
AJ Sayer, LAKENO	.200
Brennan Pruszinske, BURNS	.200
Tanner Kluis, NUG	.200
Dominic Austing, CHUTES	.207

Innings pitched

Tory Miller, NISSWA	9.0
Billy Riach, LAKENO	9.0
TJ Graumann, NISSWA	9.0
Paxton Jordahl, HUTCH	9.0
Chase Meyer, NUG	8.1
8 tied at	8.0

Batters struck out

Jackson Douglas, ROCHRED	9
Dominic Austing, CHUTES	8
Tory Miller, NISSWA	7
Zach Smith, BURNS	7
TJ Graumann, NISSWA	7
Chase Meyer, NUG	7
5 tied at	6

Batters SO out looking

TJ Graumann, NISSWA	5
Tory Miller, NISSWA	5
Billy Riach, LAKENO	3
Brian Wold, EXCLSIOR	3
14 tied at	2

Saves

Danny Kuhn, ALEX	2
Kellen Rholl, TCRED	1
Tyler Dittrich, NUG	1
Connor Oestrich, EXCLSIOR	1
Brett Herber, LAKENO	1

Game summaries for Day Two

Game 16

Eagan 001 340 010 9 12 1
 Champlin Park 010 100 000 2 8 5

Inman, Ossell (5) and Seipel. Kiminski, McGill (5) and Balega. WP Ossell. LP Kiminski.

Eagan and Champlin Park woke up early on Saturday to finish what they had started on Friday. When the suspended game resumed at Red Haddock Field in Bloomington at 8:30 a.m., each team had a new pitcher. Jake Ossell of Eagan replaced the previous day's starter, Kevin Inman, while Champlin Park's Brian McGill took over from Friday's starter, Trevor Kiminski. Eagan struck quickly in the restart with four runs in the top of the fifth. That made the score 8-2 in Eagan's favor. In addition to gaining credit for the pitching win, Eagan's Ossell went four-for-six at the plate with three RBI. Nic Balega and Trevor Munn each had two hits for Champlin Park. One of Balega's hits was a triple.

Game 17

Nisswa 220 004 002 10 16 0
 Tri-City Red 001 000 040 5 15 4

T. Miller and Casperson. Gaworski, N. Lovdahl (3) and Meyer. WP T. Miller. LP Gaworski. Home Run: Streiff, Nisswa.

In a game that featured 31 hits, Nisswa stayed alive in the State Tournament by topping Tri-City Red 10-5 Saturday morning. Taylor Streiff had a huge day at the plate for Nisswa with a home run and two doubles. Drew Sannes and T.J. Graumann each had a pair of doubles to help Nisswa's hit parade. Joe Fredrickson went three-for-five for Tri-City Red, while Charlie Callahan went four-for-five. Tri-City Red finished the season 28-8.

Game 18

Chaska 104 213 2 13 14 3
 Champlin Park 101 000 0 2 7 2

Roskam and Schmidt. Duane, Brooks (5) and Balega. WP Roskam. LP Duane.

Chaska pitcher Luke Roskam handcuffed Champlin Park's hitters, while his teammates pounded out 14 hits in a seven-inning, 13-2 victory. Carter Schmidt led the winners' attack with a three-for-four day and three RBI. Justin Arnold, Alex Kuhlmann and Roskam each had two hits. Daniel Kielb and Trevor Kiminski had two hits each for Champlin Park, which finished the season with a 21-8 mark.

Game 19

Rochester Redhawks 013 000 300 7 11 3
 Alexandria 000 323 11x 10 15 1

Lundquist, Stubbs (6) and Mathiowetz. Bowden, Kuhn (9) and Thompson. WP Bowden. LP Lundquist.

Winning pitcher Parker Bowden was tough when he had to be for Alexandria. In eight innings, using 123 pitches, he gave his team a chance to win. Alexandria's hitters had a field day with 15 hits in the ballgame. Catcher Mitchell Thompson went three-for-five and third baseman Travis Krueger went three-for-four for the winners. Casey Hammerback, Parker Revering and Blake Stockert each added two hits. Zach Robertson's three-for-five performance led the Redhawks, who finished their season 21-15.

Game 20

St. Cloud Chutes 000 042 010 7 15 1
 New Ulm Gold 100 000 000 1 6 0

Austing, Auger (9) and Imholte. Helget and Kannegeisser. WP Austing. LP Helget

The St. Cloud Chutes stayed alive in the losers' bracket with a tidy 7-1 victory over New Ulm Gold. Pitcher Dominic Austing dominated with eight strong innings before Thomas Auger finished the job. Jeff Fasching had a big day at the plate for the Chutes with two singles and a triple in four at-bats. Thomas Imholte and Brian Minks each added three hits. Gabe Knowles had two hits for New Ulm Gold, which finished the season with a 27-9 record.

Game 21

Chaska 000 003 410 8 6 4
 Nisswa 602 032 20x 15 14 1

Arnold, Wickstrom (4) and Roskam. Bukowski,, Janousek (7) and Casperson. WP Bukowsk. LP Arnold.

Nisswa jumped on Chaska for six runs in the first, inning on the way to a 15-8 victory. Mizuki Shamsky had a big night at the plate for Nisswa with two doubles and a single. Logan Madsen also had three hits for the winners. Carter Schmidt led Chaska with three hits.

Game 22

St. Cloud Chutes 405 053 4 21 16 2
 Alexandria 100 200 3 6 8 4

Auger and Thompson. Hockert, Learn (1), Krueger (5), Hedstrom (7) and Imholte, Sufka (6).

The St. Cloud Chutes kept their hopes alive in the losers' bracket by routing Alexandria 21-6. Four runs in the first inning and five more in the third gave the Chutes a big cushion. Steven Neutzling hit two doubles and a triple for the Chutes. Lead-off batter Brady Yoerg went four-for-five for the Chutes and scored four runs.

Game 23

Hutchinson 100 221 000 6 13 1
 Excelsior 030 004 20x 9 10 4

Kurth, Hahn (6) and Villegas. Helgeson, Oestreich (6) and Cote. WP Oestreich. LP Kurth. Home Runs: Cote, Excelsior, Kubal, Excelsior, Oestreich, Excelsior.

Excelsior's assault on the Green Monster at Eagan High produced a 9-6 victory over Eagan. Winning pitcher Connor Oestreich hit a grand-slam homer for the winners, while Aaron Kubal and Ian Cote drove solo homers over the Green Monster, Eagan's 40-foot left-field wall. Kyle Hoffman went three-for-three for the winners. Kubal and Luke Pettersen each had two hits. Keegan Macemon, Matt Kieser, Jake Arlt and Jake Wendland each had two hits for Hutchinson.

Game 24

Lakeville North 012 021 204 12 16 1
 Eagan 310 001 020 7 13 8

Ahlers, Herber (6) and Jensen. Peterson, Gaylord (6) and Seipel. WP Herber. LP Peterson.

Lakeville North lead-off man A.J. Sayer set the table all night in a 12-7 victory over Eagan. He went four-for-six with two runs scored and one RBI. The rest of the North line-up followed suit. Ben Jensen and Nick Oblak each added three hits, while Cole Nonweiler, Matt Arnold and Angelo Altavilla added two hits apiece. Jake Ossell had three hits and scored three runs to lead Eagan's attack. Teammate Nathan Kuhn added three hits and two RBI. Ed Olson added two RBI for Eagan.