



American Legion Minnesota Division I Tournament

Gazette



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Lakeville North earns regional berth

St. Cloud, Excelsior in semi-final game

Lakeville North held on to defeat Excelsior 6-4 in the battle of unbeaten Sunday and will advance to the title game of the Division I Minnesota American Legion Tournament.

Because Minnesota sends two teams to the national regional tournament this week in Fargo, Lakeville North automatically will be one of the teams that represents the state.

In addition to Excelsior, the other semi-finalist today will be the St. Cloud Chutes who edged Hutchinson in a classic extra-inning game.

St. Cloud rallied from five runs down in the eighth to tie the game, and both teams scored in the ninth. St. Cloud put a run across in the top of the tenth and won the game.

St. Cloud and Excelsior will play at 10 a.m. Monday at Eagan Varsity Field, and the winner

of that game will play Lakeville North in the championship game at 2 p.m.

There will be a brief awards ceremony following the title game.

The winner of that game will also automatically advance to the national regional tournament at Fargo, which begins Thursday.

The winner of the region will advance to the American Legion World Series in Shelby, N.C., which begins Aug. 15. The final game will be telecast on ESPNU.

In the Division II tourney being held at Luverne, Plato won the title, St. James was second, and Foley won the third place title.

Pitchers save day for Lakeville

By John Sherman

After Cole Nonweiler pitched 8 and 2/3 solid innings against the state's top-ranked team, Excelsior, he was pleased to give the ball to ace reliever A.J. Sayer for the last out.

"A.J. has done it before, and I was OK with turning it over to him," said Nonweiler after the game.

Sayer fell behind 2-0 against Excelsior's No. 1 home run threat, first baseman Josh Falk. With the bases loaded, he wanted to pitch Falk carefully, the same way he would if he had a

base open.

"I wanted to throw a strike, but not give him anything too good," said Sayer.

The 2-0 offering was on the outside half, and Falk had a big rip at it, but could only foul it off.

On the 2-1 pitch, Sayer found the spot he wanted. Falk hit a towering pop-up that seemed to hang up forever. One runner had crossed the plate and another was about to cross by the time the ball settled into the glove of second

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She's here, there, everywhere

By John Sherman

It's hard to keep up with Kim Kuhn, the blonde-haired super volunteer, who has performed a variety of duties at the State American Legion Baseball Tournament this week.

You might see her taking water to the umpires or helping a radio crew set up for a broadcast. Or you might see her mingling with out of town fans, giving them tips on the best places to go for dinner in Eagan.

"Basically, if I see something that needs to be done, I do it," she said after she watched Lakeville North beat Excelsior 6-4 in the winners' bracket final Sunday afternoon at Eagan High School.

Kim knows how to delegate, but sometimes delegating isn't the quickest way to serve the customers, who are the Legion baseball fans of

Minnesota.

"I have helped out at a lot of the local tournaments over the years," said Kim. "My biggest thing is that I want people to have a positive experience in Eagan."

In her other life, Kim is a marketing manager, involved in product development for Smead Manufacturing in Hastings.

She spotted a manila folder at tournament headquarters and said, "Our company made that."

In addition to being a super volunteer, Kim is also a super mom. Her son Nathan is 16 and plays on the Legion team. He has already played baseball in nine states as a member of various traveling teams. Kim's daughter played volleyball and basketball in the Eagan youth

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Volunteer Kim Kuhn poses with her son Nathan and husband Steve.

Lakeville North

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baseman Joey Larson.

Coach Jared Simon gave Sayer brief instructions when he brought him to the mound from center field.

"I wanted off-speed to Falk, and I told A.J. that I'd rather walk him than give him a pitch down the middle," said Simon.

Simon didn't think Lakeville North had the game won, even with a six-run lead. Excelsior put four runs on the board in the bottom of the eighth to shrink Lakeville North's lead to 6-4.

"I knew Excelsior would be coming after us," said Simon. His players knew it, too.

"The main thing is everyone on our team has a lot of heart," said Nonweiler. "Against Excelsior, you just have to come out strong, like you would against any other team."

Lakeville North claimed one of Minnesota's two berths in the Central Plains Regional with Sunday's victory, but still needs one more win on Monday to take the state championship.

"Going to regionals is awesome," said Sayer. "But in the end, we want to be state champions."



Excelsior players try some rally magic that worked for four runs in the eighth inning, but the rally fell short as Lakeville North prevailed 6-4.

Excelsior regroups for Monday semi-final game

By John Sherman

A team that has played 59 games this season has obviously had some early morning games.

With that in mind, Excelsior head coach Rob Hager believes his team will be ready any time of the day when there's a Central Plains Regional berth on the line.

Excelsior will play the 10 a.m. game Monday at Egan High School. A win would

give the Fire Club a trip to the Regional. And another win in the 1 p.m. game, in a rematch with Lakeville North, would give Excelsior a state championship.

"The first game tomorrow is enormous," Hager said Sunday night. "But to be honest, we're not here for second place."

Excelsior got a bad break against Lakeville

North Sunday when starting pitcher Jared Ridge was injured in the first inning.

"In the best case scenario it is a bruise," said Hager.

Ridge watched with his arm in a sling, as David Cushing came out of the bullpen to battle Lakeville North for 7 and 2/3 innings. Zach Amundson finished it for Excelsior with a scoreless ninth inning.

In the eighth, Stuart Maes singled to start the rally, and then a pitch hit lead-off batter Luke Pettersen on the helmet after glancing off his right arm. It was a high, inside pitch, and the plate umpire ruled that Pettersen hadn't made an attempt to get out of the way, so he kept him in the batter's box.

Hager went out to argue and convinced the plate ump to ask the base ump for his input.

When the base ump agreed with Hager, Lakeville North head coach Jared Simon came out of the other dugout with his palms up, seeking an explanation.

"Because the pitch was high and inside, Luke turned away from it, and that is how it hit him," said Hager. "He put his arm up to protect his face."

When play resumed, Brian Wold singled and Griffin Powell added an RBI single. Pettersen scored on a wild pitch, and then Derek Branson singled home Excelsior's last two runs.

The Fire Club put two runners on base in the bottom of the ninth, and then Powell singled with two out. That gave clean-up hitter Josh Falk a chance to win it, but Lakeville North reliever A.J. Sayer got him on a pop-up to end the game.

"Their guy [starting pitcher Cole Nonweiler] beat us," said Hager. "We couldn't connect when we needed to."

Stars of the Day

Ed Olson of the host team from Egan went five-for-five at the plate in a 10-6 loss to the St. Cloud Chutes. Olson's hits included four singles and a triple. He also had a stolen base.

Brian Minks of the St. Cloud Chutes pitched a complete game to beat Egan 10-6. He was also a key man on the offensive side with three hits and four runs scored.

Steven Neutzling of the St. Cloud Chutes went four-for-five with two RBI in a 10-6 victory over Egan Sunday at Red Haddock Field. Neutzling was the winning pitcher in relief on Saturday night as the Chutes stayed alive with a 12-11, 10-inning victory over Hutchinson.

Fernando Villegas, Hutchinson's catcher, went two-for-five with a home run and four RBI in his team's 14-8 victory over Nisswa.

Marcus Hahn had five RBI in Hutchinson's 14-8 victory over Nisswa. In Hutchinson's season-ending 12-11 loss to the St. Cloud Chutes, Hahn had another good day at the plate, going three-for-five.

Matt Casperson of Nisswa went two-for-

two and also drew two walks in his team's 14-8 loss to Hutchinson.

Cole Nonweiler of Lakeville North pitched 8 and 2/3 innings of a 6-4 win over Excelsior in the winners' bracket final Sunday at Egan High School. He struck out five while holding the Fire Club to six hits.

A.J. Sayer made a clutch relief appearance with two outs and the bases loaded against Excelsior. He retired the only man he faced on a pop-up to save the game.

Ben Jensen had two hits and one RBI in Lakeville North's 6-4 victory over Excelsior.

Griffin Powell, the left fielder for Excelsior, had two hits and made a spectacular diving catch in his team's 6-4 loss to Lakeville North.

Derek Branson had two of Excelsior's three RBI in a 6-4 loss to Lakeville North.

Tommy Auger went three-for-five at the plate and scored the winning run as the St. Cloud Chutes stayed alive in the State Tournament with a 12-11, 10-inning victory over Hutchinson at Red Haddock Field in Bloomington.

Complete stats from tourney's first three days

Batting Average Team

Tri-City Red	.364
St. Cloud Chutes	.361
Hutchinson	.355
Lakeville North	.329
Alexandria	.328
Chaska	.323
Nisswa	.321
Eagan	.293
Champlin	.292
Rochester Redhawks	.278

Batting Average Individual

Charlie Callahan, TCRED	.667
Brad Mathiowetz, ROCHRED	.636
Ed Olson, EAGAN	.625
Gabe Knowles, NUG	.545
Jeff Fasching, CHUTES	.542
Jake Ossell, EAGAN	.529
Carter Schmidt, CHASKA	.529
AJ Sayer, LAKENO	.529
Mizuki Shumsky, NISSWA	.524
Brian Minks, CHUTES	.500

Slugging Percentage

Brad Mathiowetz, ROCHRED	.909
Fernando Villegas, HUTCH	.905
Steven Neutzling, CHUTES	.846
AJ Sayer, LAKENO	.824
Gabe Knowles, NUG	.818
Mitchell Kurth, HUTCH	.800
Jeff Fasching, CHUTES	.792
Marcus Hahn, HUTCH	.783
Mitch Thompson, ALEX	.778
Ed Olson, EAGAN	.750

On Base Percentage

Brad Mathiowetz, ROCHRED	.733
Charlie Callahan, TCRED	.667
AJ Sayer, LAKENO	.652
Ed Olson, EAGAN	.650
Gabe Knowles, NUG	.643
Luke Roskam, CHASKA	.632
Jeff Fasching, CHUTES	.621
Jake Ossell, EAGAN	.619
Mitchell Kurth, HUTCH	.600
Brian Minks, CHUTES	.588

Runs Scored

Brian Minks, CHUTES	13
Mitchell Kurth, HUTCH	10
Steven Neutzling, CHUTES	9
Fernando Villegas, HUTCH	9
Jake Wendland, HUTCH	9
Brady Yoerg, CHUTES	9
Jeff Fasching, CHUTES	8
Jake Ossell, EAGAN	8
4 tied at	7

Hits

Steven Neutzling, CHUTES	13
Brian Minks, CHUTES	13
Jeff Fasching, CHUTES	13
Mizuki Shumsky, NISSWA	11
Mitchell Kurth, HUTCH	10
Ed Olson, EAGAN	10
Charlie Callahan, TCRED	10
7 tied at	9

Runs Batted In

Steven Neutzling, CHUTES	14
Fernando Villegas, HUTCH	11
Jeff Fasching, CHUTES	9
Marcus Hahn, HUTCH	9
Carter Schmidt, CHASKA	8
Derek Annett, CHASKA	7
Angelo Altavilla, LAKENO	7
Brindley Theisen, CHUTES	7
Taylor Streiff, NISSWA	7
Michael Michalak, RCHRED	7

Doubles

Mitchell Kurth, HUTCH	6
AJ Sayer, LAKENO	5
Tommy Auger, CHUTES	4
Ben Jensen, LAKENO	4
Drew Sannes, NISSWA	3
Steven Neutzling, CHUTES	3
Jake Ossell, EAGAN	3
Mitch Thompson, ALEX	3
Mizuki Shumsky, NISSWA	3
TJ Graumann, NISSWA	3

Triples

Steven Neutzling, CHUTES	3
Jeff Fasching, CHUTES	2
Dominic Austing, CHUTES	2
Taylor Streiff, NISSWA	2
Marcus Hahn, HUTCH	2
12 tied at	1

Home runs

Fernando Villegas, HUTCH	3
11 tied at	1

Total bases

Steven Neutzling, CHUTES	22
Jeff Fasching, CHUTES	19
Fernando Villegas, HUTCH	19
Marcus Hahn, HUTCH	18
Taylor Streiff, NISSWA	16
Brian Minks, CHUTES	16
Mitchell Kurth, HUTCH	16
Mizuki Shumsky, NISSWA	14
Mitch Thompson, ALEX	14
AJ Sayer, LAKENO	14

Walks

Jake Wendland, HUTCH	8
Brian Minks, CHUTES	7
AJ Sayer, LAKENO	6
Luke Roskam, CHASKA	6
7 tied at	5

Stolen bases

Thomas Imholte, CHUTES	6
Jake Ossell, EAGAN	4
Taylor Murphy, CHASKA	3
Tony Kjolsing, CHASKA	3
Justin Arnold, CHASKA	3
Ben Mezzenga, TCRED	3
Jake Wendland, HUTCH	3
13 tied at	2

Earned Run Average Team

Earned run avg	
Lakeville North	3.75
Excelsior	4.25
Chaska	4.35
Nisswa	4.80
Eagan	5.00
St. Francis	5.00
New Ulm Gold	5.19
Delano	5.82
St. Cloud Chutes	5.86
Champlin	5.87

Earned Run Average Ind.

Brandon Rushmeyer, CHAM	0.00
Jake Ossell, EAGAN	0.00
Mizuki Shumsky, NISSWA	0.00
Brian McGill, CHAMPLIN	0.00
Dominic Austing, CHUTES	1.12
Luke Roskam, CHASKA	1.29
Alex Bauermeister, STF	1.50
Connor Oestrich, EXCLSIOR	1.50
Brennan Pruszinske, BURNS	1.80
TJ Cardenas, EAGAN	2.00

Opposing Batting Average

Jake Ossell, EAGAN	.143
Chase Meyer, NUG	.167
Connor Oestrich, EXCLSIOR	.174
TJ Cardenas, EAGAN	.188
Jack Wickstrom, CHASKA	.190
Hayden Bukowski, NISSWA	.194
Cole Nonweiler, LAKENO	.200
Brennan Pruszinske, BURNS	.200
Dominic Austing, CHUTES	.207
Derek Annett, CHASKA	.222

Innings Pitched

Jayden Juergensen, HUTCH	14.0
Tommy Auger, CHUTES	9.0
Billy Riach, LAKENO	9.0
TJ Cardenas, EAGAN	9.0
TJ Graumann, NISSWA	9.0
Paxton Jordahl, HUTCH	9.0
Tory Miller, NISSWA	9.0
Dillon Solid, NISSWA	8.2
Cole Nonweiler, LAKENO	8.2
Chase Meyer, NUG	8.1

Batters Struck Out

Jackson Douglas, RHRED	9
Dominic Austing, CHUTES	8
Tory Miller, NISSWA	7
Zach Smith, BURNS	7
Chase Meyer, NUG	7
TJ Graumann, NISSWA	7
TJ Cardenas, EAGAN	7
4 tied at	6

Saves

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

Game summaries for Day Three

Game 25

Hutchinson 10(13) 000 000 14 14 3
 Nisswa 002 210 102 8 9 7

Baumetz, Kieser (5) and Jordahl. Madsen, Solid (3), Shumsky (5) and Casperson. WP Kieser. LP Madsen. Home Runs: Hahn, Hutchinson. Villegas, Hutchinson.

Home runs by Fernando Villegas and Marcus Hahn helped power Hutchinson to a 14-8 win over Nisswa Sunday at Eagan High School. A 13-run inning in the top of the third sealed the deal for Hutchinson. Hahn finished with five RBI and Villegas had four. Jake Wendland contributed three hits for Hutchinson. Jayden Fleck, Jayden Jurgensen and Jake Arlt each added two hits. Matt Casperson and T.J. Graumann led Nisswa with two hits apiece. Nisswa finished the season with a 19-2-1 record.

Game 26

St. Cloud Chutes 420 100 030 6 11 3
 Eagan 200 020 200 10 13 3

Minks and Imholte. Kuhn, Haugh (2), Inman (5) and Seipel. WP Minks. LP Kuhn.

Despite a five-for-five performance by Eagan's Ed Olson, the St. Cloud Chutes topped the Wildcats 10-6 in an elimination game at Bloomington's Red Haddock Field. The Chutes got off to a good start with four runs in the first inning and two more in the second inning. Brian Minks pitched a complete game for the Chutes and also scored four runs. Shortstop Steven Neutzling of the Chutes went-four-for five with a pair of RBI.

Game 27

St. Cloud Chutes 003 011 051 12 15 1
 Hutchinson 503 010 101 11 13 2

Gross, Sufka (3), Dehler (5), Neutzling (9) and Juergensen, P. Jordahl (8), Villegas (8) and Villegas and G. Jordahl (8). WP Neutzling. LP Villegas.

Hutchinson came out firing against the St. Cloud Chutes and scored eight runs in the first three innings. Once Chutes' hitters got going, it became a slugging duel. The Chutes took an 11-10 lead into the bottom of the ninth inning, and then a two-out double to right-center by Hutchinson's Mitchell Kurth tied the score 11-11. In the top of the tenth, the Chutes took the lead for good. Tommy Auger doubled to left field, and then Jack Schramel's ground out moved him over to third. Brady Yoerg reached on a throwing error as the go-ahead run scored. Neutzling, Auger and Jeff Fasching had three hits each for the winners. Marcus Hahn went three-for-five, while Hutchinson teammates Kurth, Fernando Villegas and Jayden Fleck had two hits apiece. The game lasted 3 hours and 20 minutes.

Game 28

Lakeville North 210 000 120 6 9 1
 Excelsior 000 000 040 4 7 2

Nonweiler, Sayer (9) and Jensen. Ridge, Cushing (1), Amundson (9) and Cote. WP Nonweiler. LP Ridge. Save: Sayer.

Lakeville North pitcher Cole Nonweiler kept Excelsior off the scoreboard for all but one inning during his team's 6-4 victory in the winners' bracket final Sunday afternoon at Eagan High School. Excelsior scored four runs in the bottom of the eighth and loaded the bases in the ninth before relief pitcher A.J. Sayer recorded the final out of the game on a pop-up. Lakeville North held a 6-0 lead going into the last of the eighth inning before Excelsior mounted a rally. Nonweiler was a catalyst on offense, as he went one-for-one with three walks. North catcher Blake Jensen went two-for-three and first baseman Nick Oblak had two RBI. Mike Petrick added a pair of hits for the winners, who will advance to the championship game at 1 p.m. Monday at Eagan High School. Excelsior will play for a Central Plains Regional berth in a 10 a.m. game Monday at Eagan High School.

Super volunteer

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programs. Kim's husband Steve will take over supervising the field when Kim goes back to work on Monday morning.

Kim is by nature a problem solver, and she has the kind of personality that wins people over.

"I enjoy interacting with people – even if they are cranky people," she said.

Everyone in her neighborhood knows how much Kim loves baseball, and many of them bring back bobbleheads for her from their out-of-town vacations.

What are Kim's impressions of the State Tournament?

"This is very, very good baseball," she said. "Some of the plays that we have seen are really great to watch. It will be fun to see if some of the players go on to a higher level."



Excelsior's Griffin Powell slides in ahead of the the tag by Lakeville North's Ben Jensen in action at Eagan on Sunday.