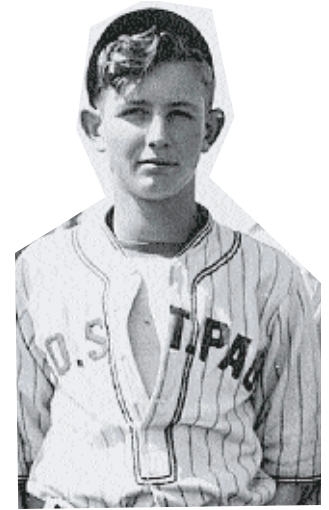




American Legion Minnesota Division I Tournament

Gazette



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Banquet kicks off tourney weekend

The 2015 Division I American Legion Baseball Tournament kicked off with a banquet featuring two great story tellers.

Dick Jonckowski, the emcee at the national Legion World Series and also the voice of Gopher Baseball and Basketball, introduced Patrick Reusse, the StarTribune columnist and radio and television personality.

Jonckowski entertained the 500 or so gathered at Chanhassen High School with his usual lineup of humor, including both groaners and good jokes.

"I usually bring my wife with me," he

said, "because I hate to kiss her goodbye."

Reusse, who has been a journalist at both the St. Paul Pioneer Press and the StarTribune, said baseball was his favorite sport.

He recalled stories from growing up in Fulda, including one where his father, who was a coach, brought three short 15-year-olds to a Little League tourney. "He made sure they were clean-shaven."

He told several stories about Wayne Hattaway, the former Twins coach, who was known as an agitator in the clubhouse. "If a player had a bad day, he tell him, 'It's

not your fault, son, it was the scout who signed you.'"

Two major awards were also given out at the banquet.

Wade Adamson, a baseball player at Willmar who was later drafted by the Twins, was honored with the Graduate of the Year Award.

Adamson, who has been a longtime coach, said baseball was a great game, and "the baseball fraternity is something special."

Adamson paid tribute to the veterans who secured America's freedom.

Jim Donohue of Edina was inducted into the Minnesota American Legion Baseball Hall of Fame.

Donohue gave a history lesson of Legion ball in the state, much of which he was involved in as a player, coach and Legion volunteer.

"I encourage you all to play hard, play clean and have fun."

Division 1 play begins today

The 2015 Minnesota American Legion Baseball Tournament begins today at four fields in the Chanhassen area.

The double-elimination tournament will continue through Monday when the state champion will be determined at the Chanhassen High School Field.

Teams from across the state earned their way to the tourney by winning sub-state tournaments.

Those teams are: New Ulm Gold, Alexandria, Prior Lake, Sartell, Grand Rapids, Eden Prairie, Princeton, Woodbury Blue, Austin, North St. Paul, Maple Grove, Tri-City Red (New Brighton), Hutchinson, Champlin and Wayzata. The host team is Chanhassen.

First round play will begin this morning at four area fields. In addition the Chanhassen, games will be played at Chaska Athletic Field, Round Lake Stadium in Eden Prairie, and Braemar Field in Edina.

This will be the 90th state Legion tournament.

Minnesota has had five national cham-

pions over the years, including three in the last 16 years.

Minneapolis Richfield won in 1943, Edina won in 1983, Tri-City Red won in 1999, Rochester won in 2003, and Eden Prairie in 2011.

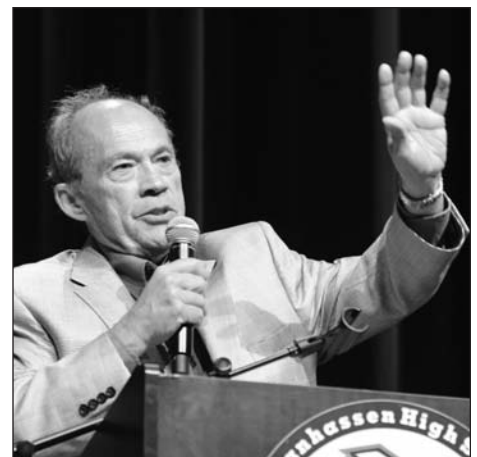
At last year's tournament, Lakeville North was the state champion and the St. Cloud Chutes were the runner-up.

Both of Minnesota's finalists will advance to the national regional tournament which will be held in Bismarck, N.D., beginning next Wednesday.

The winner of that tourney will go on to the American Legion World Series which will be held in Shelby, N.C., beginning Aug. 13.

Minnesota's Division II Tournament for the smaller schools in the state will also begin today in Morris. Teams in that tournament include LaCrescent, Wells, Jordan, Minneapolis Giantvalley, Foley, BOLD, Moose Lake, Dilworth/Glyndon/Felton and host Morris.

This year's Division I tourney is sponsored by Chanhassen Post 580.



StarTribune columnist Patrick Reusse was the featured banquet speaker.