

The Gazette



AMERICAN LEGION

DIVISION I TOURNAMENT

Volume 20, No. 3

Delano, Minnesota

Monday, August 1

Minnesota's two regional contenders chosen

In an unusual turn of events, the two teams Minnesota will send to the national regional American Legion Baseball tourney have already been determined.

Forest Lake and Wayzata will represent the state at the regional in Bismarck, N.D., beginning Wednesday.

Woodbury, which marched through the tournament's first two days unbeaten, announced late Saturday that they would not have enough players available to compete at Bismarck.

That meant that Wayzata, which came back through the loser's bracket to the semi-final, and Forest Lake, the

other unbeaten team, would automatically advance.

Still at stake on Monday, though, is the state championship and where the teams will be placed on the bracket.

Woodbury will play Wayzata at 10 a.m. at Municipal Field in Delano, and the winner will play Forest Lake in the championship game at 1 p.m.

In Division II play at LeSueur-Henderson, Minneapolis Giantvalley won the championship by defeating Glenwood-Lowry 3-2.

LeSueur-Henderson, the host team, defeated Pierz 12-2 for third place.



NICE CATCH -- Luke Wallner of Forest Lake grabs a Gatorade tossed to him by his mother.

Team Delano puts on a first class tournament

By John Sherman

Delano, known to area residents as that baseball town along the Crow River, has earned high grades this week as the host of the Division I State American Legion Baseball Tournament.

"These are four of the best baseball fields we've had for a State Tournament," Perry said on Sunday morning. "The two fields in Delano are pristine, and the fields at Maple Lake and Loretto are outstanding, as well."

What does it take to put on a good State Tournament?

Perry has a checklist he refers to each year.

"No. 1 is the weather," he said. "If you have good weather, two good umpires and good fields, that's about 98.7 percent of it. But you also have to be organized behind the scenes. The directors from Delano's Host Committee have done a good

job. You might see them taking tickets, working on the fields, score-keeping and even making the popcorn."

The Delano Host Committee is small but efficient.

"We have a core group that includes Brent Soderberg, Chris Hart, Adam Jaunich, Jack Lynch, Joe Schleper, Jeff Janzen, Mark Peterson and me," said Steve Eilen, the President of the Delano Athletic Club. "We bid for the State Legion Tournament three years ago, after we hosted the State Amateur in 2013. All of the improvements we made at the ball park were already in place."

The week prior to the State Legion Tournament was an extremely busy time for the Host Committee. Arranging the banquet at the high school was a big task with 250 hungry ball players and their families to feed. Red's Café in Montrose provided the feast.

"You are always nervous in the days leading up to the tournament," said Eilen, "but once the games begin you can start to enjoy it. Brent Soderberg did a really good job with the logistics of the tournament. He's the one who gets all the finances right."

Eilen, who manages the Delano town baseball team, graduated from Delano High School

in 1983. He has played amateur ball in town and his love for Delano baseball runs deep.

A former Army Ranger, Eilen said he is proud to have served his country.

"I am a member of the Delano Legion," he noted. "I was born here and grew up here. Hosting this tournament is a service to the American Legion.

Continued on Page 4



Steve Eilen, Joe Schleper and Brent Soderberg are three of the key volunteers from Delano's Host Committee.

Director Mike Perry helps make Minnesota #1

By John Sherman

Under the direction of State American Legion Baseball Director Mike Perry, Minnesota has the highest number of teams in the nation, 326.

Perry's tireless promotion of Legion Baseball is one reason why Minnesota has surpassed other pro-Legion Baseball states, including Nebraska, Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

"Mike is totally dedicated to the Legion program and its principles," said Tenth District Legion Baseball Director Gene Berg of St. Louis Park. "He started out as a coach and league director and then was Tenth District Director. Those jobs helped prepare him to head the state program."

Perry first became involved in Legion Baseball as an assistant coach with the Hopkins Post 320 team. When Jim Donohue retired as South Hennepin League Director, Excelsior Legion Baseball Manager Jim Peck threw Perry's name into the hopper.

"Mike is so thorough and diligent, I knew he would do an excellent job as an administra-

tor," Peck observed. "He puts the kids first and lets them play the game."

When the late Darwin Berg of Hutchinson retired from the State Baseball Director's position, Perry was already a Vice Director, members of the state committee considered him next in line.

"I had no illusions the job would be a walk in the park," said Perry as he watched a game in the Division I State Tournament at Delano on Sunday. "I am finishing my fourth year as the State Director, and I have two years left, which I plan on fulfilling."

A heart attack suffered March 31 of this year slowed Perry down for a couple of weeks, but he's as good as ever now.

"I've taken some weight off and I'm exercising, so I feel great right now," he said. "Hopefully, I'm good for another 20 years."

Now that he is 70, Perry has seen just about everything in 26 years as a Legion volunteer.

"The Legion Baseball program teaches values that lead to

life skills," said Perry. "Players learn the importance of teamwork, work ethic, citizenship and honoring our veterans."

Americanism is part and parcel to the program. Many of the coaches are veterans, who know the importance of serving their country, staying humble and saluting the American flag.

"In my job, you have the normal administrative frustrations, but it is very rewarding when you see our youth playing Legion Baseball," said Perry.

Coaches and team managers respect Perry's judgment and also his people skills.

"I have Mike on my speed dial," said Bloomington Gold American Legion Baseball Manager Ron Nenovich. "Mike is never too busy to take my phone call or answer a question. I might be No. 1 on his problem-solving list."

"A big part of Mike's job is communication," said Tenth District Director Berg. "He does a good job of keeping everyone informed and involved in the program."

Fourth District Legion Baseball Director Gail Kalata



Mike Perry

said, "Mike is a wonderful family man and a doting grandfather. I was pleased to watch his Hall-of-Fame induction during the State Tournament banquet. After so many years of service, the award was well-deserved."

Perry said the American Legion Baseball Hall-of-Fame award is "humbling."

He didn't become a volunteer to win an award. All he wanted to do was make Legion Baseball a rewarding program for Minnesota youth.

Forest Lake emerges as the tourney's lone unbeaten

As the only undefeated team left in the State Tournament, Forest Lake has assured itself of a first- or second-place finish and a berth in the Central Plains Regional Aug. 3-7 in Bismarck,

N.D.

Cameron Kline and Zack Raabe, two of the star players for Forest Lake, are excited about going on the road again next week after earning the right

to advance with a 9-7 win over Woodbury Blue in the winners' bracket final Sunday night.

"Going to the regional is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," said Kline, who entered Sunday's game with a .727 batting average.

"We want to go out to Bismarck, play some good baseball and be teenagers," Raabe added.

Forest Lake is 26-5 overall going into the state-title game Monday at 1 p.m. in Delano.

"There is no preference for playing Wayzata or Woodbury Blue," said Raabe. "We don't play opponents, we play baseball."

"Our strengths are pitching depth and chemistry," said Kline.

Stars of the Day

Dan Marod of Little Falls hit a three-run homer Sunday morning, but the Flyers lost to Wayzata 8-6 in an elimination game.

Jarett Briol of Wayzata improved to 6-0 for the season with the pitching win in his team's 8-6 victory over Little Falls.

Griffin Schneider of Wayzata went three-for-four with three runs scored in Wayzata's win over Little Falls.

Anthony Fumuso, Hamline Purple's first baseman, went three-for-four in a 7-1 victory over Maple Grove.

Dom Lonnetti improved to 7-0 on the season by pitching Hamline Purple past Maple Grove 7-1.

Matt Wallner drove in four of Forest Lake's nine runs in a 9-7 victory over Woodbury Blue.

Ronnie Sweeny of Woodbury Blue homered in his team's loss to Forest Lake.

Zack Raabe of Forest Lake had a two-run single in the seventh inning for the winning margin in Forest Lake's victory over



Jonah DeSmet slides in for Forest Lake as Sebastian Holte-Mancera gets ready to apply the tag.

Complete statistics for first three days

Batting avg

1. Cameron Kline-FRSTLAKE	.600
2. Patrick Whalen-WACONIA	.571
Nathan Kallenbach-FAIR	.571
4. Joseph Bernard-PRINCE	.556
5. Ronnie Sweeny-WOOD	.529
6. Zack Raabe-FRSTLAKE	.500
Jordan Wilkerson-WOOD	.500
Riley Johnson-EASTVIEW	.500
Emerson Egly-EDINA	.500
10. John Woehler-EASTVIEW	.438

Slugging pct

1. Joseph Bernard-PRINCE	1.222
2. Cameron Kline-FRSTLAKE	.933
3. Ronnie Sweeny-WOOD	.824
4. Jordan Wilkerson-WOOD	.813
5. Emerson Egly-EDINA	.667
6. Mitchell Jerde-FRSTLAKE	.625
7. Caleb Carlson-BEMIDJI	.600
8. Parker Hlavacek-WAYZATA	.588
9. Riley Johnson-EASTVIEW	.583
10. Nathan Kallenbach-FAIR	.571

Runs scored

1. Griffin Schneider-WAYZATA	10
2. Jake Marsh-WAYZATA	9
3. Parker Hlavacek-WAYZATA	7
Jake Schmitz-FRSTLAKE	7
5. Austin Jenks-LTEFALLS	6
Cam Keenan-WAYZATA	6
Ronnie Sweeny-WOODBURY	6
Logan Welch-WOODBURY	6
9. 6 tied at ...	5

Hits

1. Griffin Schneider-WAYZATA	11
2. Will Oberg-WAYZATA	9
Zack Raabe-FRSTLAKE	9
Ronnie Sweeny-WOODBURY	9
Cameron Kline-FRSTLAKE	9
6. Cam Keenan-WAYZATA	8
Justin Jenks-LTEFALLS	8
Anthony Fumuso-HAMLIN	8
Jordan Wilkerson-WOODBURY	8
10. 9 tied at ...	7

Runs batted in

1. Cameron Kline-FRSTLAKE	9
2. Parker Hlavacek-WAYZATA	8
3. Hunter Swanson-LTEFALLS	7
Ronnie Sweeny-WOODBURY	7
5. Cody Goedderz-WAYZATA	6
Jordan Albers-MPLGROVE	6
Jordan Wilkerson-WOODBURY	6
8. 7 tied at ...	5

Doubles

1. Adam Hallberg-LTEFALLS	3
Austin Jenks-LTEFALLS	3
Jake Marsh-WAYZATA	3
Jordan Wilkerson-WOODBURY	3
Joseph Bernard-PRINCE	3

Triples

1. Jordan Wilkerson-WOOD	1
Mitchell Jerde-FRSTLAKE	1
Charles Horton-MPLGROVE	1
Will Oberg-WAYZATA	1
Jack Stoddard-WACONIA	1
Otto Grimm-BEMIDJI	1

Home runs

1. Daniel Marod-LTEFALLS	2
2. Jordan Schramel-DELANO	1
Joseph Bernard-PRINCE	1
Hunter Swanson-LTEFALLS	1
Ronnie Sweeny-WOODBURY	1
Justin Weinberg-HAMLIN	1
Parker Hlavacek-WAYZATA	1
Cameron Kline-FRSTLAKE	1

Total bases

1. Cameron Kline-FRSTLAKE	14
Ronnie Sweeny-WOODBURY	14
3. Jordan Wilkerson-WOOD	13
Griffin Schneider-WAYZATA	13
5. Will Oberg-WAYZATA	12
6. Hunter Swanson-LTEFALLS	11
Joseph Bernard-PRINCE	11
Daniel Marod-LTEFALLS	11
9. 4 tied at ...	10

Walks

1. Parker Hlavacek-WAYZATA	7
2. Issac Collins-MPLGROVE	6
Jake Marsh-WAYZATA	6
4. Ian Walker-FRSTLAKE	5
Cody Goedderz-WAYZATA	5
6. Will Oberg-WAYZATA	4
Jake Wensmann-FRSTLAKE	4
Sebastian Holte-Manc-WOOD	4
Daniel Ryan-HAMLIN	4
10. 16 tied at ...	3

Hit by pitch

1. Jake Schmitz-FRSTLAKE	4
2. Andrew Lewis-MPLGROVE	2
Jonah Desmet-FRSTLAKE	2
Thomas Miller-LTEFALLS	2
Otto Grimm-BEMIDJI	2
Brady Miller-EASTVIEW	2
Braden Backowski-LTEFALLS	2
Jake Marsh-WAYZATA	2
9. 38 tied at ...	1

Sac bunts

1. Jack Johnson-HAMLIN	2
Justin Schultz-WACONIA	2
Ian Walker-FRSTLAKE	2
Logan Tollefson-EASTVIEW	2
5. 29 tied at ...	1

Stolen bases

1. Issac Collins-MPLGROVE	5
2. Alex Logelin-WACONIA	3
3. Jared Young-BEMIDJI	2

Zack Raabe-FRSTLAKE	2
Jared Swanson-FRSTLAKE	2
Riley Johnson-EASTVIEW	2
Nathaniel Larson-BEMIDJI	2
Derek Martin-WACONIA	2
Jake Schmitz-FRSTLAKE	2
10. 32 tied at ...	1

Earned run avg

Adam Nichols-WACONIA	0.00
Dillon Whittaker-WACONIA	0.00
Nathan Martinson-MPLG	0.00
Thomas Miller-LTEFALLS	0.00
Zach Smith-PATRIOTS	0.00
Jack Stoddard-WACONIA	0.00
Riley Johnson-EASTVIEW	0.00
Logan Saltou-PATRIOTS	0.00
Austin Jenks-LTEFALLS	0.00
Cole Albers-CHAMPLIN	0.00

Opposing bat avg

1. Logan Saltou-PATRIOTS	.050
2. Zach Smith-PATRIOTS	.071
3. Sam Larson-PRINCE	.100
4. Danny Deis-WAYZATA	.118
5. Dillon Whittaker-WACONIA	.121
6. Parker Hlavacek-WAYZATA	.143
7. Adam Nichols-WACONIA	.146
8. Lane Gerber-RAPIDS	.148
9. Austin Jenks-LTEFALLS	.154
10. Jake Peterfeso-HAMLIN	.160

Innings pitched

1. Leo Lerner-HAMLIN	12.0
2. Adam Nichols-WACONIA	11.2
3. Dominic Lonetti-HAMLIN	10.2
4. Dillon Whittaker-WACONIA	10.0
5. 9 tied at ...	9.0

Batters struck out

1. Tom Skoro-WAYZATA	8
Leo Lerner-HAMLIN	8
Matthew Wallner-FRSTLAKE	8
4. Cameron Kline-FRSTLAKE	7
5. Andrew Nelson-CHAMPLIN	6
Dillon Whittaker-WACONIA	6
Sam Larson-PRINCE	6
Derek Larson-EASTVIEW	6
Jordan Schramel-DELANO	6
George Loxtercamp-BEMIDJI	6

Batters SO out looking

1. Leo Lerner-HAMLIN	5
2. Sam Larson-PRINCE	4
Derek Larson-EASTVIEW	4
4. 8 tied at ...	3

Wins

1. 28 tied at ...	1
-------------------	---

Complete summaries third day

Game 25

Little Falls 000 001 320 6 8 2

Wayzata 301 120 10x 8 12 1

Briol, Marsh (8) and Young. Reller, Weisz (6) and Backowski. WP Briol, LP Reller. Home Runs: Marod (Little Falls), Swanson (Little Falls).

Wayzata withstood a Little Falls rally to remain in the running for the state title Sunday morning at Delano Municipal. Jarett Briol ran his season record to 6-0 with late relief help from Jake Marsh. Griffin Schneider led Wayzata with three hits, while teammates Jake Marsh, Reece Smith and Cameron Keenan had two hits each for Wayzata, which improved to 38-3 overall. Dan Marod and Hunter Swanson hit home runs for Little Falls. Thomas Miller had two hits for the Flyers, who finished 3-2 in the tournament and 11-5 for the season.

Game 26

Maple Grove 000 010 000 1 7 2

Hamline Purple 400 000 30x 7 9 2

Hutchinson, Hanson (7) and Lewis, Lonnetti, O'Brien (9) and Weinberg. WP Lonnetti. LP Hutchinson.

Hamline Purple dashed Maple Grove's state-championship dreams Sunday afternoon after taking a 4-0 lead in the bottom of the first inning. Pitcher Dom Lonnetti keyed the 7-1 win by going eight innings. Anthony Fumuso led Hamline's attack with three hits and two RBI. Caleb Gates and Jayden Roehl each had two hits for Maple Grove, which finished the season with a 19-7 record.

Game 27

Wayzata 203 000 006 11 10 1

Hamline Purple 001 010 000 2 7 5

Skoro and Marsh. Lerner, Arends (4) and Ryan. WP Skoro. LP Lerner. Home Run: Hlavacek (Wayzata).

Thomas Skoro, Wayzata's undefeated left-hander who has signed to play with Kansas State University next season, pitched a complete game to eliminate Hamline Purple 11-2. Skoro struck out eight, walked two and allowed seven hits. Reece Smith, Parker Hlavacek and Jarett Briol each had two hits for Wayzata, which improved to 39-3. Skoro is 5-0 this season. Jordan Ammons was the only Hamline Purple player with two hits in the game.

Game 28

Woodbury Blue 010 100 320 7 12 3

Forest Lake 003 022 20x 9 9 0

Paulson, Horman (6) and Holte-Mancera. Boesel, Hildreth (7), Palo (8) and Walker. WP Boesel. LP Paulson. Home Run: Sweeny (Woodbury).

Forest Lake took the winners' bracket final in a close contest against Woodbury Blue. Mitch Jerde, Matt Wallner and Jared Swanson each had two hits for Forest Lake and Zack Raabe had a key two-run single in the seventh inning. Jordan Wilkerson had three hits for Woodbury Blue. Nick Gehrt and Josh Mazur each added two. Ronnie Sweeny homered for Woodbury.

Gazette newspaper marks it's 20th anniversary

Twenty years ago at the baseball park in Chaska, one of Minnesota's smallest newspapers was born.

It only appears for four issues every year, and its circulation is less than 500 for each issue.

It's called the *Gazette*, and it's the official newspaper of the American Legion Division I State Tournament.

"I remember the first time I did it," said John Sherman, sports editor for Sun Newspapers in Minnesota. "I thought I was going to take a vacation from newspapering, but it turned out to be a four-day vacation doing a newspaper."

Sherman is the ace reporter and photographer for the *Gazette* and Al Zdon, the baseball secretary for Minnesota Legion Baseball, is the editor. Help comes from Fourth District Director Gail Kalata and a host of different statisticians through the years.

"You meet so many great people in Legion baseball," Sherman said. "It's the friendships you develop. What could be better?"

Sherman has done hundreds of interviews and taken thousands of pictures through the years. Some are repeats, and Sherman estimates he's done seven or eight stories on coaching legend and Legion Director Jim Peck. "And six of those were Jim's idea," Sherman said.

Zdon said his main memory over the years is the constant battle with technology including balky computers, wireless hookups that failed, and long drives to find a copier that could produce the *Gazette*. Even this year, the business in Delano doing the copying ran out of toner for the Sunday issue and an emergency run to Buffalo was necessary.

"It always seems like we were working on plan B."

Zdon said it's a little gratifying that each year on the first day of the tournament, people look at the *Gazette* like its an advertising circular. "But by Sunday or Monday, it's become a collector's item."

Gail Kalata said the newspaper has improved through years, including the addition of up-to-date statistics from the tournament.

She said the *Gazette* had the same motto as the post office, "Neither rain nor sleet..."

"I remember one time in Marshall when we were huddled together in an RV trailer late at night working on the *Gazette*, and huge storm hit. It was rocking the trailer back and forth. We thought we were goners."

Zdon said its unknown how long the *Gazette* will continue, but it's been a good run. "The best part is the close-knit friendships from people who gather once a year to make this little newspaper. Oh, my, we've had some times."

Delano team works together

Continued from Page 1

Everything we make on the tournament goes back into our program and the field."

As long as baseball is played in West Central Minnesota, Delano will be in demand as a host site.

"We have two good fields in town," said Eilen. "Adam Jaunich heads up our field prep. For the State Legion Tournament we were also able to use Maple Lake and Loretto. When you're running a tournament, playing surfaces are everything."