

## 2007 Minnesota State Tournament Coverage

### Rosin wrangles Coon Rapids

By Greg Schmidt

August 27, 2007

Tri-City (32-10) was dealt one of the toughest first round matchups in the 16-team state tournament when they met fourth-ranked Coon Rapids Aug. 9 at Kelly Field in Bloomington. Not so much because of the ranking — after all the Red was right behind them in fifth — but more importantly because of their intimidating lineup of hitters.

“Just look at that roster. They can hit the ball,” said manager Jeff Larsen, who considers Coon Rapids (45-12) among the top three hitting teams — if not the best in the state.

Fortunately for Tri-City fans, Red had ace Seth Rosin on the hill. The Minnesota Twins draft pick and U of M signee met the challenge with a nine-inning complete game 5-1 victory.

“Seth just stood up to them. It was a great effort,” Larsen said.

Keeping the vaunted Coon Rapids lineup to one (unearned) run was no easy task.

Traditionally one of the most prolific hitting teams in the state, Coon Rapids found little if any success against Rosin. The lone chalk mark for Coon Rapids arrived with a run on an error in the sixth, but by that time, the Red had built a strong 4-0 lead. Run-scoring singles by Brandon Porten (2 for 6, RBI) in the fourth, and Tommy Thompson (2 for 3, 2-BB, 3B, RBI) in the fifth, got it started. In the top of the sixth, Tri-City doubled their advantage on a sacrifice fly to centerfield by Erik Anderson (1 for 2, RBI, SF, SAC, BB) and single from Dan Reichert (1 for 3, RBI, 2-BB). Tri-City added an insurance run in the ninth, after Thompson smacked a one-out triple and later scored on a bases-loaded walk to Brian Marshik (2 for 4, RBI, BB).

Rosin (9-IP, 7-H, 0-ER, 0-BB, 8-SO) tightened his grip late in the game, while retiring the final seven batters. Meanwhile, Coon Rapids’ ace, Jordan Frogner (9-0 entering the game with a 1.40 ERA), was pulled after a leadoff walk to Reichert in the fifth, and that wasn’t the last change on the mound. Tri-City went on to finish with 13 hits against four pitchers. Leading that charge was Blake Searles, who finished 3 for 6 with a double, and Brett Cleveringa, who walked and went for 2 for 2.

“I think [Rosin] actually got stronger,” said Larsen, who also credited the stellar defense.

One of the many fine plays arrived in the seventh. After a one-out double by Matt Oberfoell, an infield single from Preston Ghizoni left no play for Red third baseman Brandon Porten. However, instead of runners at the corners, shortstop Brian Marshik alertly followed Oberfoell to third, while Porten reversed course and made a perfect throw back to third.

**State tourney (first round)**  
**Tri-City Red 5, Coon Rapids 1**  
(Game 42, Aug. 9, 2007)

Tri-City Red	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	1	—	5	13	1
Coon Rapids	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	—	1	7	0

Rosin and Anderson; Frogner, Evans (5), McMahon (7), Hable (9) and Oberfoell.  
W-Rosin (6-1). L-Frogner (9-1).

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**Overheard**

“Imagine the [additional] home runs they could have hit,” said former Red assistant coach Mark Paone ('98-2000), who was speculating on the mandatory nine-inning games in the state tournament. Paone was in attendance with son, Brian, for the Red's second round game. In the 1999 World Series championship season, the Red played eight games in the state tourney (after losing in the first round), but games were only scheduled for seven innings. The team finished the season with 126 round-trippers, still a national record, led by Brian Paone, who finished with 33.

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**Valley bombs Red — again**

By Greg Schmidt  
August 27, 2007

A few hours after nearly shutting out Coon Rapids, one of the best hitting teams in the state, the Red (32-11) faced another in Apple Valley (40-10), but had far less success. As has been the case over the last decade, the third-ranked 76ers again proved too much for the fifth-ranked Red, with the final tally logging in at 13-4 in the second round at Alimagnet Park in Burnsville.

Early on, however, the Red went toe-to-toe with their State rival, and the game was knotted at 4-4 heading into the fifth inning. Brett Cleveringa (2B, RBI, BB) and Brian Marshik (HBP, BB) led the way — each going 2 for 3. With one hit apiece: Blake Searles (HBP), Erik Fiegel, Nick Colwell (2-RBI) and Jack Ries (HBP).

Erik Anderson (RBI) knocked in a run in the first inning. In the following inning, the Red extended their lead with two more on a booming RBI double over the centerfielder's head by Cleveringa. The next run came home on a ground out from Colwell.

However, that quick start was wiped out when the 76ers recorded five straight hits, including three for extra bases to take the lead 4-3 in the third. In the bottom of the fourth, Colwell's two-out single evened the affair, but it would be the last time Tri-City touched home plate the rest of the night. The same couldn't be said for Apple Valley. The 76ers scored nine unanswered (six with two outs) over the next four innings on 11 hits and four walks.

The Red never recovered. In fact, they only managed two hits in the last five innings against 76ers ace Joe Erb, who fanned 15, a high-mark against the Red this summer.

This scenario wasn't entirely unfamiliar to long-time Red fans. Apple Valley had done this before.

Most recently in 2005 – when the 76ers blew out the Red in the first round. “But they 10-runned us that time so I guess we’re improving,” quipped Larsen. With a more serious tone Larsen added: “It was tough and they got to use their ace.”

By virtue of a much easier first round tilt, Apple Valley coach Bruce Young was able to save his top pitcher for the second round. The 76ers blasted Mankato 25-9 in the first round.

“And they hit the ball against us too. They were solid hits,” Larsen said. The 76ers racked up 18 hits including four doubles and a triple.

In 2002, the Red was eliminated by the 76ers in the losers’ bracket. In 1998, it was another first round defeat delivered by Apple Valley.

The latest loss ended a long day for the Red. A day, Larsen said, that could have been planned better by tourney officials.

“We had the late banquet last night [that followed a full day of other tourney commitments] and then played at 9 a.m. today,” he said. That was bad enough, but the Red’s second-round game wasn’t scheduled until after dinnertime. Larsen continued: “It was odd waiting around so long for the second game. I’m not making an excuse; I’m just saying they should make the guys get out of their hotel rooms [15 minutes away], instead of making guys like us and Coon Rapids get here early from the north.”

Coon Rapids, because of the first round loss to the Red, was able to play their second game at 3 p.m., while the Red was stuck waiting for a 7 p.m. start (originally slated for 6 p.m.). “I would have liked to have had that 4 p.m. game,” Larsen said.

**State tourney (second round)**  
**Apple Valley 76ers 13, Tri-City Red 4**  
(Game 43, Aug. 9, 2007)

Apple Valley	0	0	4	0	3	3	2	1	0	—	13	18	1
Tri-City Red	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	—	4	8	1

Erb and Buck; Porten, Searles (6), Cleveringa (8), Pedersen (9) and Anderson.  
W-Erb (10-1). L-Porten (7-1).

## **Red rally leaves Patriots in full retreat**

By Greg Schmidt

August 27, 2007

For the third time in as many state tourney games, Tri-City (33-11) was matched up against an opponent's ace pitcher and for the second time they managed to be successful in a dramatic come-from-behind 8-7 win Aug. 10 over the Rochester Patriots (19-13) in the losers' bracket at Alimagnet Park in Burnsville.

A rally of epic proportions might be a slight understatement. The Patriots pounded their way to a commanding 5-0 advantage with a pair of booming round-trippers in the second inning. The first was controversial, but only because it was hit so incredibly high. The two-run moon shot by Erik Knutson actually lifted well above the towering left field foul pole. Jordan Rishavy followed moments later with a solo shot over the centerfield wall.

Two innings later, Rishavy extended the margin with a two-run single. Heading into the bottom of the sixth, the Red's trip to the State Tournament appeared to have only a few innings left.

But then something happened.

"All those older guys in the dugout didn't want this to be their last game," said Nick Colwell. Apparently the 'younger' guys wanted to play on as well. After a single by Dan Reichert (1 for 3, BB, 2-R) and walk to Joe Phillippi, a groundout to second by Tommy Thompson (0 for 3, RBI) put the Red on the board. Brian Marshik (2 for 3, BB, RBI, 2-R) pushed another home with a single up the middle. Brandon Porten (2 for 4, 2-R, 2B) followed with a double, before Colwell (2 for 4, 3-RBI) and Erik Anderson (0 for 3, BB, RBI) each brought another run across. The momentum was on the move and shifted even further in the top of the seventh.

Boosting the excitement was a great effort by reliever Nick Colwell, who was entering his longest stint of the summer. The defense also stepped up with a double play to end the inning.

"That double play . . . just knowing the defense was there — that was the biggest thing for me," Colwell said. "It kind of calmed me down."

It also put the Patriots in full retreat. In the bottom of the frame, the Red continued their rally. With two out, Blake Searles (1 for 4, 1-R) scored on a wild pitch. Another wild pitch closed the gap to one run. Rochester was feeling the heat, but inexplicably stayed with their ace Spencer Brady, who was 7-1 with two saves and a 1.10 ERA coming into the game.

"I think he got a little rattled," Colwell said. "He's a good player though, but people started hitting."

Including Colwell. His two-run double put the Red in front for the first time.

Players rushed out of the Red dugout as if it was a walk-off game-winning double. Well, it was the game-winner eventually. But first there were two more innings of Rochester batters to deal with. Colwell, who played full-time in the outfield this summer, but also tossed only four innings while rehabbing from an injury during the hoops season, began his fifth inning of relief in the game. In the eighth, he retired the side in order. In the ninth, after a Red miscue allowed the leadoff hitter to reach and the Patriots got a two-out single, Colwell fanned Brian Ness to end it. Colwell recorded four of his six strikeouts in the last two innings.

Colwell admitted that holding the lead was much more fun. “It’s a whole different type of pitching. You’re attacking instead of flood control,” he said.

Larsen was more than pleased with the clutch relief appearance.

“It was nice bringing him along a little this summer,” Larsen said. “It just shows what a talented pitcher he’s going to be. He came in there in a tough situation, and he got the outs and the defense picked it up too.”

**State tourney (Losers’ bracket)  
Tri-City Red 8, Rochester Patriots 7  
(Game 44, Aug. 10, 2007)**

Rochester Patriots	0 5 0	2 0 0	0 0 0	—	7	10	1
Tri-City Red	0 0 0	0 0 4	4 0 x	—	8	9	1

Brady, Moen (7) and Odegarden; Fiegel, Myers (2), Colwell (4) and Anderson. W-Colwell (3-0). L-Brady (7-2). HR-Roch-Knutson (12), Rishavy (2).

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**Red gains best finish in five years  
Willmar ends bid for sixth State Title**

By Greg Schmidt  
August 27, 2007

Tri-City Red was on their way to making the final six teams in the State Tourney for the first time since 2000, after a two-out, three-run fence-jumper by Brett Cleveringa in the first inning Aug. 10 at Alimagnet Park in Burnsville. Unfortunately, the game had a long way to go – nine innings to be exact – but it didn’t take that long for Willmar (24-7) to recover and win convincingly, 12-7, in the losers’ bracket.

Willmar got a pair back in the second before blowing it open with seven plate touches in the third.

“We walked a few, hit a few, and they hit the ball pretty good,” said manager Jeff Larsen. In the win-or-go-home tilt Larsen was hoping not to dip into the bullpen too early. “We needed four innings out of our starter. We didn’t get that,” he said.

Willmar did manage four-plus innings out of starter David Anderson, but a Red surge ended his day in the fifth. Highlighting the fifth inning rally were RBI singles by Nick Colwell and Cleveringa. Sandwiched between the timely hits: Erik Anderson blasted a sacrifice fly to center. That trimmed the deficit to three runs. Unfortunately, Willmar came right back with a pair in the bottom of the frame.

In the seventh the Red scored one more, but like their first rally, Willmar answered once again to keep momentum and ultimately their claim to a ticket into Saturday's super-six.

In their final tilt of 2007, the Red finished with 11 hits led by Cleveringa (3 for 5, HR, 2B, 4-RBI). Brandon Porten (2 for 4, 2-R, BB) and Nick Colwell (2 for 4, 2-R, 2B, BB, RBI) both collected two hits, while Brian Marshik (2-BB), Anderson (RBI, SF), Blake Searles (RBI) and Jack Ries had one apiece.

Centennial knocked out Willmar in the next round, before falling to Coon Rapids.

"I think if we had got by [Willmar], we could have kept going and maybe got to Coon Rapids again," Larsen said. Coon Rapids eventually lost to Apple Valley to finish third. Eden Prairie defeated Apple Valley to claim their unprecedented fourth consecutive State Title.

The Red finished 33-12 and registered their longest State Tourney run since '02, when they also finished sixth.

Larsen was impressed: "It was good for the kids. Just getting to state was a pretty big objective . . . four games is great."

It was impressive considering the Red was loaded with so many rookies. "There wasn't a lot of experience to draw from for most of the kids," Larsen said. "I think for the ones coming back it gives them a lot more confidence."

And next year? The Red will not have to reload extensively like this summer, but there are needs. Six of the 18 will not return: Seth Rosin, Blake Searles, Brandon Porten, Brett Cleveringa, Erik Fiegel and David Norgard. Each pitched extensively this summer.

"We'll have enough arms, some coming up, and I think we'll put out a pretty good defensive unit," Larsen said. "We just have to hit a lot more."

### **State tourney losers' bracket**

#### **Willmar 12, Tri-City Red 7**

(Game 45, Aug. 10, 2007)

TCRed	3	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	—	7	11	4
Willmar	0	2	7	0	2	0	1	0	x	—	12	14	0

Thompson, Fiegel (3), Pedersen (4), Norgard (7) and Anderson; D. Anderson, Lotthammer (5), Van Hauen (7), Scheffler (8) and Malmgren.  
W-D. Anderson (5-1). L-Thompson (0-2). HR-TCR, Cleveringa (2).