

Fargo Tournament Coverage

Marshik lifts Red from jaws of defeat

By Greg Schmidt

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Brian Marshik had already received congratulations from teammate Nick Colwell before he even swung the bat with two outs in the top of the seventh in a 2-1 Red victory over West Fargo (6-8) in the first round of pool play June 29 at Matson Field. Apparently Colwell knew something great was about to happen.

He was right as the left-handed hitting Marshik (2 for 4, HR, 2-RBI) crushed a pitch to the opposite field putting the Red (14-1) in front for the first time in the game, 2-1.

“We had this whole thing going,” Marshik said. “We were all like brought on by [Nick] Colwell to say congratulations while on deck. I told [Brett] Cleveringa (1 for 3) and he got a base knock. Nick said it to me and it worked out well.”

Marshik had struck out in his first two at bats before ending the no-hit bid with a single in the fifth. The fourth time Marshik had it figured out as he stepped to the plate with two out and pinch runner Brock Pedersen, the tying run, waiting on first.

“I was thinking to myself that [pitcher Dusty Gregory) was going to give me that outside pitch ‘cause he struck me out two times with it,” Marshik said. “If he did it again, I wasn’t going to look at it this time.”

The Red’s first lead of the game held as reliever David Norgard brushed off a leadoff single in the bottom of the frame to retire West Fargo in order and secure his second save.

That followed a brilliant performance by Erik Fiegel, who went the first six innings and scattered five hits with one walk, two strikeouts and one unearned run.

Tri-City Red 2, West Fargo 1 (Game 15, June 29, 2007)

Tri-City Red	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	—	2	3	1
West Fargo	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	—	1	6	0

Fiegel, Norgard (7) and Anderson; Gregory and Schroeder. W-Fiegel (2-0). L-Gregory (0-2). HR-TC, Marshik (1).

Bismarck sinks Tri-City

By Greg Schmidt

After a marvelous pitching duel in their tourney opener, Tri-City found themselves in a slugfest in the second round of pool play. Unfortunately for the Red faithful, Bismarck (N.D.) did the serious slugging in a 14-7 final June 29 at Matson Field.

Bismarck (11-4) blasted three fence jumpers including two three-run bombs in the second inning to claim a 9-0 advantage. Trailing 11-1, the Red plated two in the bottom of the third and closed the gap to 11-6 on a three-run double by Nick Colwell (2 for 4, 2B, 3-RBI) in the fourth. That followed consecutive singles by Matt Tetrick (2 for 4), Brandon Porten (1 for 4) and Brian Marshik (2 for 2, 2-BB, SB).

But that was as close as the Red could get as the teams traded runs in the fifth. The Red (14-2) did manage to load the bases in the sixth prompting a Bismarck pitching change with one out. Two batters later the final Red rally was extinguished with the bases left jammed. Bismarck added more insult in the seventh with their third slow trot of the game, a two-run shot to hand the Red (14-2) their worst defeat of the summer.

Brett Cleveringa led Tri-City going 3 for 4 with a double and RBI. Blake Searles (RBI, 2-SB) finished 2 for 4 while Jake Lechner (BB, 2-RBI) and Tommy Thompson had one hit apiece.

Bismarck (ND) 14, Tri-City Red 7 (Game 16, June 29, 2007)

Bismarck	0	9	2	0	1	0	2	—	14	12	0
Tri-City Red	0	1	2	3	1	0	0	—	7	14	1

Wentz, Wentzel (6) and Bohan; Cleveringa, Searles (2) and Tetrick. W-Wentz (4-0). L-Cleveringa (2-1). HR-Bis, Loomis (2), Bohan (1), Wenzel (2).

Red wins big, gets shutout

By Greg Schmidt

Tri-City (15-2) rebounded after a demoralizing defeat the day before, with a convincing five-inning, 14-0 rout of Oconomowoc (Wis.) June 30 in the third round of pool play at Matson Field. However, before the game assistant coach Russ Poser wasn't sure how the Red would respond after just witnessing Oconomowoc (4-9) fall big Bismarck (N.D.).

“Everyone had just seen them come off of losing 17-0 to Bismarck, so I told them right away not to take this team lightly,” Poser said.

The Red got the message and came down like an anvil scoring a first-inning, season-high 10 runs.

“They were patient at the plate — that was the big thing,” Poser said. Extremely patient as it turned out. The first two runs were plated on bases-loaded walks to Brett Cleveringa (0 for 2, BB, RBI) and Erik Fiegel (0 for 1, 2-BB, RBI). Later, Brian Marshik (1 for 3, BB, 2B, 3-RBI) drew a walk in his second at bat of the inning to make it 5-0. The fun was only half over. After a pitching change, the Red offered another approach. Nick Colwell (3 for 3, BB, 2-RBI) singled past the first baseman to bring a pair home and Tommy Thompson (2 for 3, 2-2B, 4-RBI) blasted a two-run double over the centerfielder’s head to make it 9-0. Erik Anderson (2 for 3, 2B, HBP, RBI) doubled to right-center to cap the first inning Red storm. The rout was on, the outcome a formality.

But there was business yet to be done. Despite the earlier loss to Bismarck, a win meant the Red was still in the hunt for the top seed because the first tiebreaker was runs-allowed, not the typical head-to-head.

Tri-City needed a shutout to remain tied with Bismarck for runs-against. Paul Myers answered the call stranding eight in five innings. In the final inning, Oconomowoc loaded the bases, but failed to score as Myers (5-SO, 0-BB) recorded a strikeout, his second of the inning, to complete the shutout.

“Everybody was supporting each other — not to give up a run,” Poser said. And everybody contributed, most notably Marshik, who was playing centerfield and made a spectacular diving grab in right-center to end the third inning while stranding two. “That was huge,” Poser said. “He sacrificed his body out there . . . and made a great catch.”

**Tri-City Red 14, Oconomowoc (Wis.) 0, 5 inn.
(Game 17, June 30, 2007)**

Oconomowoc	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	8	1
Tri-City Red	(10)	2	0	2	x	—	14	10	0

Zimmer, Proud (1), Ebert (2) and Marshall; Myers and Tetrick. W-Myers (3-0). L-Zimmer (0-2).

Tri-City, Moorhead — another bizarre battle
By Greg Schmidt

Although the teams are based over 200 miles apart, the rivalry between Moorhead (18-3) and Tri-City Red (15-3) has become one of the more storied rivalries. Going back 15 years, the clashes have always included high drama.

The latest meeting was no different, but nobody, including Red coach Russ Poser, could have dreamt this one up. Said Poser: “I expected a close game for sure, but nothing like this.”

The Blues captured the year-long bragging rights with a hard-fought 8-7 victory June 30 at Matson Field in Moorhead. As usual the game played and ended with a barrage of question marks and disbelief as a Red rally was thwarted by a rarely used call by the umpires. Down by a run in the top of the seventh, Blake Searles drew a leadoff walk and Erik Fiegel followed with a sacrifice bunt. Unfortunately, Moorhead sniffed it out to force out the lead runner. Jake Lechner followed with a grounder as the Blues again got the lead runner before a no-chance attempt at a double play. Lechner was well past first and safe by all accounts. Then came the surprise of the tournament as the field umpire ruled runner interference by Fiegel as he slid into second. That left both runners out to seal the Moorhead victory. Poser couldn’t believe it.

“I didn’t see anything out of the ordinary and all that was told to us was that it was runner interference,” Poser said. “We got no explanation and the umps ran off the field. I’ve never seen a game end like that.”

The way the game began also provided plenty of surprises.

From the first pitch, the Red quickly grabbed control with four runs in the first inning beginning with an RBI single to left by Nick Colwell (2 for 3, BB, 2B, RBI). After Tommy Thompson (1 for 4, RBI) reached on a botched fielder’s choice, Erik Anderson (2 for 4, RBI) singled to load the bases. Moments later with two out and the bases still juiced, Brett Cleveringa (2 for 3, 2B, 3-RBI) slammed a bases-clearing double over the centerfielder to put the Red in front 4-0.

All things seemed right at that point. But the Blues, stoked by the fact that they were playing the Red and even more motivating — facing a Minnesota Twins draft choice, made the going tough for ace Seth Rosin. By the time the dust settled, the Blues had tied it with four hits, a walk, a balk and an error. Rosin finished the inning, but didn’t return because of arm soreness.

“When your ace can’t go past an inning that hurt – a lot,” Poser said. “But the guys stepped up.”

Indeed the Red’s overextended bullpen got the call and kept the game close the rest of the way. The Red moved ahead 6-4 in the third on an RBI double to right-center from Brandon Porten (1 for 2, BB, 2B, RBI). The Blues answered with a run in the bottom of the frame before claiming their first lead, 7-6, in the fourth on a two-run homer by Tony Emmerich. Tommy Thompson brought home the equalizer on a single up the middle in the sixth, but the Blues answered with a run scored on a wild pitch in the bottom of the frame.

That led to the seventh and one for the books.

“There’s always weird stuff that happens when these two teams play. I won’t comment on the umpiring though,” Poser said. After a few moments to reflect, Poser did add, “Both teams played well enough to win, but I’m sure a call like that is not the way to end the game.”

**Moorhead 8, Tri-City Red 7
(Game 18, June 30, 2007)**

Tri-City Red	4	1	1	0	0	1	0	—	7	8	1
Moorhead	4	0	1	2	0	1	x	—	8	8	3

Rosin, Norgard (2), Pedersen (4), Thompson (6) and Anderson; R. Johnson, Stone (3) and A.J. Johnson. W-Stone. L-Thompson (0-1). HR-MH, Emmerich.

Red settles for fifth at Fargo-Moorhead

By Greg Schmidt

The Red (16-3) opened and shut the 35th annual Fargo-Moorhead tournament in nearly the same fashion by claiming a 3-2 victory over Fargo Post #2 in the fifth place final July 1 at Jack Williams Stadium in Fargo (N.D.). Tri-City opened the tourney by clipping a team from the same spot on the map in West Fargo, 2-1. It was the third one-run game for the Red in the five-game trip. They lost to co-host Moorhead, 8-7, just 12 hours earlier.

Heading into the final tilt, many wondered if the Red would be able to recover after the devastating loss to the Blues that knocked the Red out of the first and third place games and vaulted the Blues into the championship which they won the following day, 12-2 over Sioux Falls in five innings.

“They were all ready to go this morning,” said coach Russ Poser, who held the reins for the weekend due to the absence of manager Jeff Larsen, who was on a family trip to the west coast. “We talked about it before the game and nobody wanted to go 2-3 on this road trip,” added Poser.

One big question remained. The needle on the Red bullpen was leaning toward empty. In the past, the squad would turn to veteran Brandon Porten.

Once again Porten stepped up to deliver a solid complete-game effort.

“Coming off three days rest and giving up only four, five hits and two runs — that was huge,” Poser said. “Going all seven was phenomenal.”

Porten (1 for 3) also provided the lone extra-base hit with a double in the sixth inning.

Tri-City led throughout after scoring a run right away in the first on a sacrifice fly to centerfield by Erik Fiegel (1 for 2, SF, 2-RBI) that plated Brian Marshik, who led off the game with a walk. In the third the Red extended their lead on RBI singles by Tommy Thompson (1 for 3, RBI) and Fiegel. Nick Colwell (2 for 4) recorded two of the Red's five hits on the day.

After facing the minimum in the fourth and fifth innings, Fargo (8-17) made a final run at Porten in the sixth and scored a pair on three hits, but a double play ended the chance to even the affair. Porten retired the side in order in the seventh to secure his team-leading fourth victory.

Poser was pleased with the three victories, but more impressed with the teamwork of the chemistry-building weekend.

“We experienced pretty much everything in this tournament and these guys were pulling for each other all weekend. I’m looking forward to see what happens from here,” Poser said.

To see what happens next will require a bit of patience as the Red enters an odd stretch. They’ll have an eight-day break until their next game July 9 against Arcade-Phalen at Johnson High School.

“It’s a weird little break, but I think they’ll be fine,” Poser said. “I think it’ll be nice for them to have a few days off and then practice later in the week . . . they’re going to be excited to come back and play again.” The team enters the break with a better mark (16-3) than last year, 13-6.

The Red’s fifth place finish is a huge improvement over last year when they ended up ninth. Tri-City has won the tourney twice in the last decade (1997 and ’99). Both tourney titles were followed up by World Series appearances. The Red also has one runnerup finish (’98), two third-place finishes (’05, ’02) and they took fourth on three occasions (’04, ’03 ’01). In 2000 the final placing day was rained out.

**Tri-City Red 3, Fargo 2
(Game 19, July 1, 2007)**

Tri-City Red	1	0	2	0	0	0	—	3	5	3
Fargo	0	0	0	0	2	0	—	2	5	0

Porten and Tetrick; Rude, Hirchert (4) and Shelton. W-Porten (4-0). L-Rude (1-1).