

Tri-City claims top honors at Moose Country Challenge

By Greg Schmidt

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Red wins a game of firsts

The Red (6-0) entered new territory June 20 in the first round of pool play, as the upstart Chesterbird team (4-5), which uses Benilde St. Margaret as its base-school, led for most of the game at Henry Sibley High School. In fact, it was the first deficit of any kind for the Red in their first five games and into the sixth – a span of 39 innings.

Everything appeared normal from the onset as Tri-City got two across the plate in grand fashion in the first inning: a two-run moon shot over right-center by Goldsmith, the first for the Red this summer. “It was an 0-2 count so I was really kind of just fighting for anything,” Goldsmith said. As it turned out, the fight had just begun, as Chesterbird, who knocked off top-ranked Coon Rapids a week ago, answered in bigger fashion by scoring six on four hits, two walks and two miscues in the second inning. Not only was the Red behind, they were down by an uncomfortable margin.

But in the words of the late grandfather of Tri-City baseball, Elmer Buttweiler: ‘No sweat.’

Goldsmith (2 for 2, 2-BB, 2B, HR, 3-R, SB, 5-RBI) followed up his homer with a two-out, full count double to left-center with the bases jammed. Suddenly it was a game again. Said Goldsmith: “I was crouching the plate ‘cause it was 3-2 . . . He gave me the inside pitch, which was a bad move on his part.”

Assistant head coach, Rus Poser, was confident the team would react well despite the early mega-deficit. “These guys never gave up . . . they knew we had the chance to come back — that we have the bats to do it,” he said.

The teams traded runs in the fourth before the Red finally got the equalizer in the fifth on a sacrifice fly by Freed (0 for 2, SF, SB, BB, RBI) that scored Imdieke (2 for 3, 2B, SB, BB). One inning later, and with the sun drifting deeper to the west, Goldsmith struck again with a key leadoff walk. With two out, he scored the game-winner on a single to left-center by Kurkowski (1 for 4, RBI). Nickols (1 for 4, 2-RBI) then finished it off by tossing his third inning of near-perfect relief work (one hit, two strikeouts).

That made him the fifth pitcher to collect a victory in the first six games. Equally impressive was Andy Gallagher, who was making his fifth appearance in six days. Said Poser: “The big thing was Gallagher giving us four [innings] and Nickols — it being only his second time out all year. A big tip of the hat to the pitchers for battling through it.”

Tri-City Red 9, Chesterbird (Benilde St. Margaret) 8

Game 6, June 20, 2008

Chesterbird	0	6	0	2	0	0	0	—	8	8	0
Tri-City Red	2	3	0	2	1	1	x	—	9	8	3

Gallagher, Nickols (5) and Tetrick; Kapryan, Woelfel (4) and Tranvik. W-Nickols (1-0). L-Woelfel (0-1). HR-TCR, Goldsmith (1).

Freed handcuffs Lakeville North with two-hitter

The Red (7-0) got their first complete game pitching effort of the year, albeit an abbreviated version, as David Freed shutout Lakeville North 13-0 in the second round of pool play June 21 at St. Thomas Academy. Freed would have gone the full seven if not for his own and teammates' spectacular performance at the plate. As it turned out, Freed (4 for 5, 2B) reached base with more frequency than the team he pitched against. He allowed two hits in the first inning, but was untouchable the rest of the way. In fact, Lakeville managed just one walk over the next five innings. After a one-out free pass in the third, Freed (3-SO) retired the next 11 batters.

Nickols (1 for 4, 3B, 2-RBI) put the Red in front with what turned out to be the game winner on a two-run triple in the third inning. In the fifth, Tri-City turned to the long-ball with solo fence jumpers by Hershey (1 for 4, HBP, HR, RBI) and Kurkowski (4 for 4, 2B, HR, 3-RBI).

If that wasn't enough to convince the 12th ranked Lakeville squad how good the Red really is, then the sixth inning left no doubt. Tri-City recorded a season-high eight runs in one inning. Goldsmith (2 for 5, 3-RBI) got it started with a two-run single followed by a sacrifice fly by Imdieke (0 for 3, SF, RBI) and RBI double from Kurkowski.

But wait, there's more: Reichert (1 for 3, BB, 2-RBI) pushed another two home with a single to right, and moments later, an error made it 12-0. Fittingly, Goldsmith finished the frenzy with his second hit of the inning, an RBI single to left.

Said assistant head coach Rus Poser, "I don't know if they ran out of pitching, but our hitters just came to hit today. They were taking good at bats — that was the big thing."

Tri-City Red 13, Lakeville North 0, 6 inn.

Game 7, June 21, 2008

TCRed	0	0	3	0	2	8	—	13	15	0
Lkvl No	0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	2	1

Freed and Tetrick; Rundquist, Freitag (6) and Hahn. W-Freed (2-0). L-Rundquist. HR-TCR, Hershey (1), Kurkowski (1).

Red outlasts Park, wins pool

After exchanging runs in the first couple of innings, the Red (8-0) eventually pulled away for an 11-6 win June 21 over St. Paul Park (7-3) at St. Thomas Academy. The major damage arrived in the third and fifth innings, sparked by a three-run cloud-kisser in the former from Nickols (1 for 4, BB, HR, 2-R, 3-RBI). In the fifth Dan Reichert (2 for 3, R, 2B, RBI, SAC) continued the Red's push with a two-out RBI single up the middle. Later, Ross (2 for 5, R, 3-RBI) punctuated the two-out rally with a two-run single to left.

And they weren't done yet, as the Red added two more in the sixth, including a double to the centerfield wall by Reichert that scored Ethan Imdieke (3 for 4, 3-R) for the third time on the night.

Also at the plate for Tri-City: Andy Kurkowski (2B) had two hits while Freed (SAC, R), Goldsmith (2B, BB, R), Hershey (BB, RBI) and Brad Blumer (2-RBI, 2-R) each had one hit apiece.

Tri-City Red 11, St. Paul Park 6

Game 8, June 21, 2008

TCR	1	1	3	1	3	2	0	—	11	14	1
SPP	2	1	1	0	0	0	2	—	6	12	5

Imdieke, Nickols (7) and Wessberg; Marks, O'Ryan (4), Sova (7) and Nordvedt. W-Imdieke (1-0). L-Marks (2-2). HR-TCR, Nickols (1).

Red advances to title game for second straight year

Back-to-back doubles in the third inning by Freed and LaDuke put the Red (9-0) in front for the first time June 22, and they never looked back on the way to a 12-4 rout of West St. Paul (7-4) in the semifinals at St. Thomas Academy.

The Red continued their scoring binge in every inning thereafter including a solo shot by Jesse Nickols (1 for 3, HR, BB, RBI) in the fourth. One inning later, the Red poured it on as LaDuke (1 for 4, 2B, RBI) came home on a double by Hershey. Moments later Colwell scored on a passed ball and Hershey made it 7-2 after being pushed across on a ground out to second by Tommy Thompson.

In the sixth, the Red decided to end the game early. A one-out, solo-blast from Freed kick-started a five-run flurry. With two out, Matt Tetrick (1 for 4, 2-RBI) finished it with a walk-off two-run single to right. The Red tallied 14 hits including five with two each: Ross (2 for 2), Freed (2 for 4, 2B, HR, 2-RBI), Colwell (2 for 4), Hershey (2 for 4, 2B, RBI) and Thompson (2 for 4, 3-RBI).

Tri-City Red 12, West St. Paul 4, 6 inn.

Game 9, June 22, 2008

WSP	1	0	1	0	0	2	—	4	6	3
TCR	0	1	2	1	3	5	—	12	14	4

Bertrand, Kampainen (6) and Tessmer; Page and Tetrick. W-Page (1-0). L-Bertrand.
HR-TCR, Nickols (2), Freed (1).

TC Red claims crown, remains unbeaten

Seventh-ranked Tri-City Red rallied in a big way June 22 to not only defeat 12th ranked Lakeville North for the second time in as many days, but also claim first place and, in the process, remain undefeated at 10-0 with their 10-9 victory at St. Thomas Academy. Ian Goldsmith, who finished 3 for 4 (BB, RBI), pushed home David Freed (1 for 3, 2-BB, RBI) with a two-out single to right for the game-winner.



**Tri-City Red
2008 Moose Country Challenge Champs**

Red assistant head coach Rus Poser expected the title game to be a lot more competitive than the 13-0 laugher they enjoyed against Lakeville in pool play. “They said they were throwing their ace even though they had a game with [top 10] Apple Valley the next day,” Poser said. Apparently that was just fine with the Red batters. They just kept swinging away and scored in every inning after a scoreless first.

After suffering their worst one-inning setback of the season, when Lakeville piled up seven runs in the fifth to take their first advantage 9-5, the Red closed the margin with a run in the bottom of the frame and three in the sixth to even the affair. That inning included an RBI double from Ross LaDuke and RBI singles by Brandon Hershey (2 for 3, 2B, BB, RBI) and Luke Ross (1 for 2, RBI).

Lakeville, which had got by Rosemount 12-11 in the semifinals, had excused the earlier defeat to the Red because of two players missing from their lineup due to Lions’ All-star game commitments. The problem with that argument was the Red missed, not two, but three off their roster because of the same thing. Two of them, LaDuke (2 for 5, 2-2B, RBI) and Nick Colwell (3 for 4, SF, SB, RBI) had huge performances in the championship game.

On the mound for the Red, Phil Wessberg retired Lakeville in order in the sixth and seventh innings to earn the victory in relief.

The triumph was extra sweet for the veteran Red players, who were dealt their first loss of the season (after winning the first 10) in the tourney’s championship game a year ago.

Tri-City Red 10, Lakeville North 9

Game 10, June 22, 2008

Lkvl No	0	2	0	0	7	0	0	—	9	10	2
TCRed	0	2	2	1	1	3	1	—	10	14	1

Baker, Judkins (7) and Hahn; Myers, Wessberg (5) and Tetrick.
W-Wessberg (1-0). L-Judkins. HR-LN, Thomas 2 (2).