

Red streak gets watery punch out

By Greg Schmidt

July 2, 2008

Tri-City Red was riding high after winning the championship game of the Moose Country Challenge (West St. Paul). With a 10-game unbeaten streak in hand, the Red returned to district action a day later and was stunned, not only by the defeat handed to them by host Arcade-Phalen (3-8, 3-2), but even more shocking was the fact that they were shutout 3-0 — obviously the first 0-fer this summer.

Not surprisingly the game took on a circus-like atmosphere even before the first pitch, as several sprinklers doused the infield at St. Paul Johnson High School for a solid 15-20 minutes. Once the infield was mopped up, the sprinklers switched to the outfield — and this time never stopped.

But the odd atmosphere didn't stop there, as the umpires made inexplicable calls at every turn, to the amazement and sometimes laughter by fans of both teams. It began in the first inning for the Red, as Nick Colwell was punched out at first on his grounder to short. Colwell had clearly beaten the throw, but the Red team let the miscall slide, assuming it would be 'made up' later. It wasn't. In fact, it got worse, as Arcade took a 2-0 lead into the fifth. After Dan Reichert trotted to third on a balk following his one-out double, Luke Ross and Phil Wessberg drew consecutive walks. Tommy Thompson, one of the faster runners on the team, grounded into a potential double play, but as expected, he clearly beat the throw by nearly two steps. Both teams expected a tie game as Reichert scored easily and Ross rounded third, with no hint of stopping. Instead, the rally came to a screeching halt, as the second umpire rang up the inning-ending double play. Obviously the Red fans and players were livid and the Arcade coaches could only chuckle at the incredibly blown call.

"It was an odd call," said Red manager Jeff Larsen. "But nothin' we could do. I don't know what [the umpire] was thinking over there." Larsen admitted the umps were at least consistent. "It was consistently bad . . . for us."

About the only excitement left for Red fans was a spectacular head-first diving catch into the sprinkler-made slip-n-slide by Red centerfielder Nick Colwell in the sixth inning.

"Every park has it's own mystique," Larsen said. "In 'Field of Dreams' they come out of corn. We come out of the water to make the catch in center."

In the end, the Red was left with their first loss of the summer, not to mention the first victory for Arcade over the Red since 2000. For what it's worth, that was also the year the Red 'recovered' and went on to win the state tournament.

Lost in the umpire debacle was the lack of hitting by the Red (10-1, 4-1). Aside from Reichert's two hits, the Red managed only two more — a single by Ross in the third and a triple over the sprinklers (and the centerfielder's head) in the fourth inning.

Said Larsen: “You know sometimes you get some wins under your belt and you get a loss and it kind of loosens the belt . . . You just don’t want too many or the pants fall off.”

Arcade-Phalen 3, Tri-City Red 0

Game 11, June 23, 2008

Tri-City Red	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	4	0	
Arcade-Phalen	1	0	0	1	0	x	—	3	7	0

Welle and Leary; Gallagher and Wessberg. W-Welle (1-1). L-Gallagher (2-1).

Arcade comes up short in rematch

By Greg Schmidt

July 2, 2008

It wasn’t pretty, but it was a victory, and the 10-9 triumph couldn’t have arrived at a better time after the Red (11-1, 5-1) was blanked by Arcade-Phalen (3-9, 3-3) the day before.

But ending the brief one-game skid was no easy task. The Red had to rally in the seventh with four runs. With two out, a full count and the bases jammed, Nick Colwell (3 for 5, 2B, 2-RBI, 3-R) ripped a single up the middle that scored a pair and also allowed the tying run after the centerfielder bobbled it. Colwell took second on the throw home and moved to third on a wild pitch. Jesse Nickols followed with a grounder to third, but instead of a game-ending play and victory for Arcade, it turned into a win for the Red as the first baseman dropped the throw and Colwell touched home with the Red’s first lead of the game. Both teams finished with double-digit hits, and Nickols led the way going 4 for 5 with a double, two RBI and two runs. Ross LaDuke added three hits to the Red’s total of 16 and also scored three times.

Tri-City Red 10, Arcade-Phalen 9

Game 12, June 24, 2008

Arcade-Phalen	3	3	0	0	1	0	2	—	9	10	6
Tri-City Red	2	0	3	1	0	0	4	—	10	16	1

Dushaw, Eckman (4), O’Keefe (6) and Leary; Indieke, Reichert (3), Thompson (6), Page (7) and Tetrick. W-Page (2-0). L-O’Keefe (1-1). HR-AP, Jamieson.

North St. Paul has short time in top spot

By Greg Schmidt

July 2, 2008

The Red (12-1, 6-1) didn't like being stuck in second place, so they went right to work getting back into first with a no nonsense 3-1 win at North St. Paul June 25. Tri-City was led by another spectacular outing from David Freed, who went the distance with no earned runs, scattering eight hits in near-perfect fashion and recording just three strikeouts, but as manager Jeff Larsen noted: "They were big ones . . . with runners in scoring position." The Red also executed three double plays. Said Larsen: "And I give a lot of credit to [catcher Matt Tetrick]. He called a really good game and managed it well."

North St. Paul pitcher Mark Dominik was equally impressive, while fanning six. He allowed only four hits. But the hits were timely.

Down a run in the first, Nick Colwell drew a free pass, took second on a passed ball and moved to third on a single by Brandon Hershey, before scoring on Ian Goldsmith's two-out single up the middle. In the next inning, the Red grabbed the lead for good on a two-run single to right-center by Jesse Nickols (2 for 2, BB, 2-RBI), also with two out.

The triumph moves the Red back into sole possession of first place. "It's really good — a third of the way through the [district] schedule and we're sitting pretty good," Larsen said. The Red won all five match ups against the 39ers (8-5, 5-1) last year, but none of them were easy.

"In the playoffs they'll be one of the teams. It's going to be a war again," Larsen said.

Tri-City Red 3, North St. Paul 1

Game 13, June 25, 2008

NSP	1	0	0	0	0	0	—	1	8	4
TCR	1	2	0	0	0	x	—	3	4	1

Freed and Tetrick; Dominik and Cascalenda. W-Freed (3-0). L-Dominik (1-3).

Red and Rosetown get rowdy

By Greg Schmidt

It started ugly and got uglier, but the Red (13-1, 7-1) secured a solid sendoff June 26 for their trip to Fargo with another victory in a 9-1 win at Irondale over Rosetown (2-6, 3-9).

Another big inning put the game away (six runs in the third), but it wasn't because of the Red's talented bats corps. In reality, they weren't offered too many pitches to swing at, so they walked — and walked some more. In all, 13 received free passes including two of the hit-by-pitch variety. Of Tri-City's five hits, only one was for extra bases, but it couldn't have arrived at a better time. After Rosetown catcher Alex Odegaard yelled out to his rightfielder to move in, because the current batter couldn't hit it that far, that batter, Brad Blumer, answered the taunt by ripping the very next pitch to — right field. The startled rightfielder made a run for it, but instead, lost his footing and fell flat on his back; Blumer (2 for 3, 3B, 3-RBI, BB) had himself an RBI triple.

Rosetown was 'Red-faced' and a little punchy after that. They even tried to act out their frustrations a while later. After back-to-back hitters were beamed, the second incident prompted that batter, Odegaard, to make a move towards the mound, instead of first base. Both umpires quickly moved in to stop any potential brawl, but Odegaard voiced his displeasure with that routine and was immediately tossed from the diamond. For Red fans that might have been unsure about the game's intensity during the first couple of innings, there is no doubt that the storied and often very heated rivalry hasn't missed a beat in '08.

Also knocking in runs were David Freed (0 for 3, BB, RBI), Nick Colwell (1 for 3, BB, SB, RBI) and Tommy Thompson (1 for 3, SB, HBP, RBI). Dan Reichert reached base three times going 1 for 2 with a pair of walks and Jack Ries (0 for 1) drew three free passes.

Tri-City Red 9, Rosetown 1

Game 14, June 26, 2008

Rosetown	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	—	1	6	4
TC Red	0	1	6	2	0	0	x	—	9	5	0

Philiph, Marshman (3) and Odegaard, Tester (5); Myers, Imdieke (3) and Wessberg. W-Myers (2-0). L-Philiph (1-2). S-Imdieke.
