Princeton Tournament Coverage
By Greg Schmidt
July 26, 2008

Taking care of business in the opening round
With an anticipated matchup between the top two teams in the state on their minds, the Red (30-5) got a slow start July 17 in the opening quarterfinals of the Princeton tournament, but about midway through, Red got full traction and blew by the host, 12-3.

After putting up a trifecta in the third, the Red doubled their fun in the fourth with six runs to take a commanding 9-1 advantage. Needless to say, the Red was headed to a semifinal clash with four-time defending state champ Eden Prairie.

On the mound, Dan Reichert looked fully recovered from a nagging hamstring, going the first four innings and allowing only one run on five hits. Myers (5-1) came on in relief to pick up his first save of the summer.

In the fourth inning clincher, the Red received RBI singles from David Freed (1 for 4, RBI, BB, R) and Ian Goldsmith (1 for 3, HBP, BB, 2-R, 2-RBI), and an error on the latter hit allowed two additional runs to come home. Jesse Nickols (1 for 3, 3B, R, RBI) smacked a ball to the right-center fence for a stand-up RBI triple and later scored on an error.

At the plate, Tommy Thompson (2-2B, 2-BB, 3-R, RBI), Brandon Hershey (2B, HBP, 2-RBI) and Jack Ries (3-R) had two hits apiece.

Our good friends, the Princeton hosts, thoroughly enjoy Red's participation every year.

Tri-City Red 12, Princeton 3
Game 35, July 17, 2008

Tri-City Red	0 0 3	6 1 0	2 —	12	11	0
Princeton	1 0 0	0 0 0	2 —	3	10	4

Reichert, Myers (5) and Tetrick; Snyder, Bauman (4) and Klaphake.
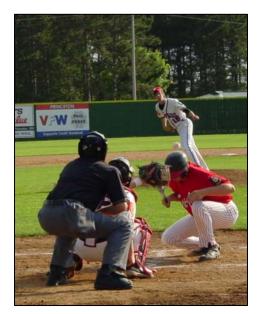W-Reichert (2-0). L-Snyder (1-3). S-Myers (1).

Eden Prairie shows grit, rallies to beat Red
It was the matchup of the summer, as top-ranked Eden Prairie (33-8-1) met second-ranked Tri-City Red (31-6) in the semifinals of the Princeton tournament July 19.

As expected, it was competitive, but Eden Prairie lived up to their top billing edging the Red 9-7, after being down five runs at one point.

Down 7-5 in the bottom of the sixth, Eden Prairie managed to get four of their first five batters to reach and that made it a one-run game. With the bases full, the error bug bit the Red for the fourth time on the night, and suddenly all things were even, with momentum heavily on Eden Prairie's side. Standout Madison Boer blasted a sacrifice fly to center, one of several deep in-the-park bombs for the No. 1 team on the night, to score what would be the winning run. A wild pitch allowed an insurance run, and the Red went down rather quietly in the seventh. After a leadoff single by Nick Colwell, Eden Prairie's Corey Willey retired the next three in order.

Eden Prairie had led early with a pair in the first inning sparked by two Red miscues. The Red quickly tied it up, and took control with another patented big inning, again with two out. The five-run third started with a leadoff single to center by Tommy Thompson (2 for 3, SB, 2-R).

After two quick outs, came a run-scoring single by Brandon Hershey (1 for 2, 2-R, RBI, HBP), followed a moment later by a fly to the gap off the bat of Jesse Nickols (1 for 2, BB, RBI, R), that fell just out of the reach of the diving left fielder, to put the Red in front 4-2. After a walk to Matt Tetrick, Eden Prairie nearly escaped any further damage, after catching the Red's courtesy runner off first base. However, they bailed on that attempt and tried to nab the lead runner heading to third. That too failed, and the Red had both in scoring position. Luke Ross (1 for 3, R, RBI) then followed with a high chopper that scored one, and an error on the throw to first put the Red up 6-2. But they weren't done yet, as Jack Ries (2 for 2, 2B, 3-RBI) added his second hit and third RBI, with a single to left-center.

First-year Eden Prairie coach Scott Hackett (formerly an assistant at Excelsior) had seen enough and promptly made a change — and it was a good one. Sam Gotham (3.1-IP, 5-SO) entered and hit the first batter he faced (David Freed), but was un-hittable after that, retiring 10 straight. Not a big shock, for a team that had already won over 30 games this summer and hoping for a shot at a fifth consecutive state championship, to have a big-time middle reliever. However, it turned out this was his debut. In fact, Hackett said he hadn't pitched in a live game in two years. It's a good bet he'll see more action soon.

Hackett said the game was worthy of a one/two matchup. "Yeah, it was a good game. It was just kind of the last team standing," he said.

Hackett admitted he was surprised at the outcome after falling behind big to the Red. "If you told me in the third inning that we were going to win this game, I might have laughed, but they hung in there and they battled," he said.

That's something Eden Prairie had been lacking lately, after losing the regular season league title to upstart Edina.

"It's nice to see that fire back," Hackett said. "They've been kind of dragging a little lately, so it was nice to see them have some fun."

Eden Prairie 9, Tri-City Red 7
Game 37, July 19, 2008
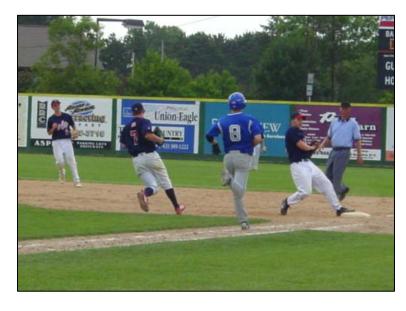
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Tri-City Red   0 2 5  0 0 0  0  —  7  8  4
Eden Prairie   2 0 2  1 0 4  x  —  9  8  1
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Colwell and Tetrick; Bode, Gotham (3), Willey (7) and Halloran.
W-Gotham (1-0). L-Colwell (2-2). S-Willey (2).

Red claims third with decisive win over Hopkins

It was a rematch of sorts, as the Red (32-6) met Hopkins (20-16) July 20 in the third place final of the Princeton tournament at Solheim Veteran's Field. Both teams had endured tough losses in the semifinals, but were ready to get reacquainted again after opening the season together June 15 — won by the Red 7-2.

The latest clash would be a true measure of how far the teams have come since that opener, and based on the result, the Red has improved a bit more with a 12-1 monster decision.

Unlike the first go-round, when the Red rotated six pitchers into the game, they only used two pitchers this time, with starter David Freed getting the bulk of the work. His six-inning effort was nearly perfect, as he scattered six hits with no earned runs and retired six straight in his last two innings of work.

At the plate, the Red delivered a steady dose of run support, building a 5-1 advantage before blowing it open with a five-run sixth. Freed (2 for 5, 2-2B, 2-R, RBI) started that barrage with a double to right and was followed by a single to left by Tommy Thompson (1 for 4, SB, R, RBI). With one out, Ian Goldsmith (2 for 4, BB, 2-R) walked to load it up, and Brandon Hershey (3 for 4, 3-RBI, 2-R, 2B, BB) brought home a pair on a single down the right field line. Jesse Nickols (2 for 3, 2B, HBP, R, 2-RBI) doubled Goldsmith home, and Ethan Imdieke (1 for 3, 2-RBI) ripped a two-run single to right-center to make it 10-1 and prompt a pitching change. Also with one hit each for the Red: Nick Colwell (1 for 2, 2B, BB, HBP, R, RBI) and Luke Ross (1 for 3, R, 2B).

Continuing with the rematch scenario, the Red met Hopkins in the championship game last summer, also won by the Red, 4-0. That win had marked the Red's sixth championship finish at the Princeton tourney ('93-'94, '97, '99, '06-'07) – and it broke a tie with St. Cloud, Moorhead and host Princeton for the most titles, making Red the sole owner of that honor.

Eden Prairie (32-8-1) narrowly won this year's championship, 4-3 over Grand Rapids (14-9), despite a late threat by Grand Rapids to take the title.

Tri-City Red 12, Hopkins 1
Game 38, July 20, 2008

Tri-City Red	1 1 2	0 1 5	2	—	12 13 2
Hopkins	0 0 0	1 0 0	0	—	1 7 6

Freed, Wessberg (7) and Wessberg, Tetrick (7); Bland, Hacker (4), Wicks (6) and Stearns.
W-Freed (6-0). L-Bland.