



Tri-City Red American Legion Baseball “101”

American Legion Baseball is the oldest, largest – and considered to be one of the most competitive -- youth baseball program in America. All 50 states, plus DC, Puerto Rico, and Canada participate. MN's participation dates back to the 1920's, with the first State Tournament being held in 1926; it has been held every year since. In 1959, MN moved into first place in the nation, with respect to the number of registered teams. MN held this position for nine years. PA now has the largest program and MN is second, having 325 teams with roughly 5,200 players annually. Over the years, tens of thousands of teams have been registered in Minnesota, providing playing opportunities for hundreds of thousands of youth.

- Tri-City Red was formed in 1990. Its predecessor was the Jacobsen Memorial Legion team, based in Mounds View. When the Jacobsen Legion announced it could no longer sponsor a baseball team, to preserve an area youth program, the Tri-City Legion Post stepped forward to create/sponsor Tri-City Red (originally Mounds View and Irondale, combined), even though it was already sponsoring Tri-City Blue (based at St. Anthony HS.) Irondale formed its own team in 2009 (Tri-City Maroon); thus, there are now three teams carrying Tri-City Post sponsorship. In addition to sponsoring the baseball teams, the Tri-City Legion has provided over \$1.5 million in funding for community, school and youth programs in our area over the years. Sadly, due to economic conditions, the Post was forced to close the doors of its physical building in 2011, although it still exists as an American Legion Post entity.
- Minnesota American Legion Baseball is divided into ten Districts. Some Districts are very large in area as well as in the number of teams – and they have multiple leagues. For example, The 3rd District is very large, with 4 leagues – and encompasses such teams as Chaska, Apple Valley, St. Paul Park, Oakdale, Stillwater, and up to Forest Lake. The 5th District covers Minneapolis and Richfield, and only has one league. The sizable 10th District includes the western and northern suburbs, stretching from Eden Prairie all the way up to Princeton, and over to Sandstone; it also has 4 leagues, and includes teams such as Excelsior, Hopkins, Coon Rapids, Maple Grove, among others. Tri-City Blue competes in the 10th District.
- Tri-City Red and Tri-City Maroon compete in the 4th District, which is essentially Ramsey County. While there are a couple of Minnesota Legion Posts that sponsor two teams, Tri-City is the only Legion in the State that sponsors two teams in different Districts. Special permission to do so was required when Tri-City Red was formed.
- The 4th District only has one league, but it is highly competitive. Since 1926, even though it has fewer teams than many of the other Districts, the 4th District has won far more State Titles than any other District – roughly 40%. The 10th District has the next highest win percentage, roughly 25%.
- In 2006, Tri-City Red led the way to adopting wood bats for all league games. Tri-City assisted with the transition, by donating an initial supply of wood bats to other teams in the league. The 4th continued to use wood through 2010; other Districts considered switching also, due to our positive example and experience with wood. Due to the introduction of BBCOR bats, wood bats are no longer used exclusively for league play in the 4th District.
- District 4 declares a League Champion, as well as a District MVP (honored at a season-end District 4 banquet for all participating teams.) Like high school, teams are assigned to section-like Sub-State Playoff Tournaments, to determine who earns a berth in the State Tournament (largest in the nation, with 16 teams participating). Although league games are 7 innings, National Rules require that 9-inning games be played beginning with playoffs – and continuing all the way through the American Legion World Series.
- Because Minnesota has so many Legion teams, in addition to sending its State Champ to one of the 8 Regional Tournaments, it also sends its State Runner-Up. Because of this, both Tri-City Red and Bloomington Blue competed in the 1999 World Series (each had been assigned to compete in different Regionals). It was the first time in history that two non-host teams from one State competed in the same World Series Tournament.
- Tri-City Red is one of 5 Minnesota teams to have won an American Legion World Series National Championship (1999). The others are Richfield (1943), Edina (1983), the Rochester A's (2003), and Eden Prairie (2011). Excelsior was the National Runner-Up in 2002, and Eden Prairie was National Runner-up in 2007 and 2010.
- Tri-City Red has been regarded as one of the top Legion programs in the State (and the nation) for many years – well before it won the National title. Red has regularly been ranked (often in the top 10) in the Statewide Legion Coaches & Media Poll, which is conducted weekly during the season and published in newspapers across the State.
- In 2000, Tri-City Baseball was one of the first teams (and Legion Posts) in Minnesota to launch a web site. Due to the State's lack of resources, Tri-City Red staff took on the task of archiving historical state-wide Legion baseball data on the site, as well as year-by-year Tri-City Red and Blue information. In addition, the Tri-City site hosts the “official” MN American Legion Baseball web pages, as well as the Gopher Classic Tournament site and the Statewide Coaches Poll. As a result, during the summer, tens of thousands visit the Tri-City Red web site – including college coaches, major league scouts, as well as Legion coaches, players and fans from all around the country. Tri-City Red staff also assists at the District and State level in many other areas, with Gail also being Director of the 4th District and a member of the MN State American Legion Baseball Board.
- For all of its cumulative contributions – on and off the field – Tri-City was honored as “Post of the Year” in 2004 by the Minnesota American Legion Board of Directors. Gail was also inducted into the MN Legion Baseball Hall of Fame in 2010.
- In 2017, Tri-City Red will achieve another milestone -- serving as host of the Minnesota American Legion State Tournament, with the main field being the new Lowertown Ballpark (Saints stadium) in downtown St. Paul. (Tri-City Red staff members were also heavily involved in activities related to the Lowertown ballpark's construction approval.)

If you have specific questions about the American Legion Baseball program or the history of Tri-City, please don't hesitate to ask – and feel free to explore the wealth of information on the web site! www.tricitybaseball.org