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We're all just living in Quintin Gonzalez's world

First baseman gets hot during Legion State Tournament

By Tim Engstrom

Quintin Gonzalez was standing on first base, and his Rosemount Irish teammates were in the dugout on the first base side of the field.

One of them hollered: "It's your world. We're just living in it."

Another added: "We're all just paying rent."

Gonzalez laughed and couldn't contain his smile.

The kids were saying it because coach Riley Peterson said it first.

"Back in high school, whenever a guy was on fire or hot, we used to say that," Peterson said.

Gonzalez got hot in the state tournament this weekend. He had five-hits-for-seven at-bats on Thursday. In Friday's game against the Rochester A's, he went eight-for-12. His batting average for the season so far is .337.

He is a freshman at University of Wisconsin-Stout, where he was a pitcher-only. He hadn't been up to bat in months.

Coach Peterson worked with his swing to get him back, well, in the swing of things. He was batting .500 at one point this season. He struggled during the Sub-State 5 Tournament in New Prague.

But at state, he's rocking it.

"He just started hitting the heck out of the ball," Peterson said.

He's one of Peterson's four super seniors who have been together for four years with him.

And Gonzalez said he has been playing with those guys since they were 11 and 12, some even since they were 5.

He credits his spark in the state tournament to not wanting to stop playing baseball with his buddies. He didn't want to go home and quit playing. Rosemount won two out of three games in pool play and advanced to the field of eight after defeating Rochester 9-1.

"I realize the state Legion games are going to be some of the last these guys are going to play," Gonzalez said. "I didn't want to say bye to my teammates."

His parents are Debbi and Stephan Gonzalez. The family lives in Apple Valley but Quintin went to Rosemount.

What makes American Legion Baseball special, he said, is the relationships and the people. He said he is thankful to the veterans who fought in wars to make it possible to enjoy baseball back home.

Gonzalez plays first base for Rosemount but also pitches. He shut out Red Wing in the Sub-State. He might pitch Saturday. Watch



First baseman Quintin Gonzalez walks off the field in the Rosemount game against the Rochester A's.

for the Rosemount game at 1:30 p.m. Saturday against Mankato National.

He said the college environment was an eye-opener.

"Everybody give their all at every game," he said.

He credits U of W-Stout player Joel Thimsen, who graduated this year, for his selfless attitude.

"He told me to always be selfless to other players, too."

Going Gonzo!

Rosemount Irish RBI machine Quintin Gonzalez takes a cut against the Rochester A's during a 9-1 victory Friday
Rich Vanderlaan
Field in Burnsville.



Recaps of the games Friday in Burnsville

GAME 17

Maple Grove 110 806 **16** 19 2
Hopkins 300 010 **4** 5 6
Ross and Petrie. Sculati, Lane (4) and P. Johnson. WP Ross. LP Sculati.

Hopkins took a 3-1 lead in the first inning against Maple Grove Friday morning at Rich Vanderlaan Field in Burnsville. But an 8-run inning that lasted an hour put Maple Grove on top 9-4.

With 19 hits, Maple Grove went on to win the pool and eliminated Hopkins 16-4. Michael Ross was the winning pitcher for Maple Grove. Zane Vitense led the Maple Grove offense, going three-for-four with two RBIs and two runs scored. Brock Zimmer went two-for-two for Hopkins, which finished the season 31-10 overall.

GAME 18

Mankato National
200 001 **4** 7 5 2
Grand Rapids
500 010 **0** 6 7 3

Luepke, Benson (6) and Johnson. Broberg, Kpmes (7), Suatos (7) and Wohlers. WP Benson. LP Broberg.

Zach Benson got the win in relief when Mankato National scored four runs in the top of the seventh inning in a 7-6 victory over Grand Rapids. As it turned out, the loss eliminated

Grand Rapids from championship consideration. Dominic Broberg started on the mound for Grand Rapids and allowed five runs and six hits in 6 and 1/3 innings. Andy Stock led Mankato National with two hits and three RBIs. Andy Linder had three hits for Grand Rapids.

GAME 19

Rosemount 320 100 3 **9** 12 0
Rochester A's 100 000 0 **1** 5 1

Quintin Gonzalez went three-for-four with three RBIs in Rosemount's 9-1 victory over the Rochester A's Friday afternoon at Burnsville's Rich Vanderlaan Field. Will Harder, Tyler Roth and Sam Klatt had two hits each for the winners.

GAME 20

Edina 010 010 2 **4** 7 1
Mpls. Lakers 000 000 0 **0** 3 1
Epple and Berghult. Walker, Moran (6) and Barbatsis. WP Epple. LP Walker.

Lefty Soren Epple pitched a three-hitter and struck out 12 as Edina defeated the Minneapolis Lakers to win a spot in the championship bracket. Adam Berghult's two-RBI in the top of the seventh gave Edina the margin it needed to win a tie-breaker over the Lakers and Grand Rapids. All three teams finished 1-2 in the pool. Short-



Many Grand Rapids players wore similar facepaint. They said it is because they have been wearing the pattern since grade-school sports. From left are Dominic Broberg, Kyler Miller, Tyler Norgard, Ben Keske and Klaus Jones.

stop Will Couchman and third baseman Tyler Munson each had two hits for Edina.

GAME 21

Willmar 100 314 0 **9** 13 1
Sartell 201 000 1 **4** 6 1
Magnuson and Arndorfer. W. Johnson, Geiger (6) and Vos. WP Magnuson. LP W. Johnson.

Willmar advanced to bracket play by beating Sartell 9-4 in a Friday afternoon game at Bob Bunnell Field in Burnsville. Jason Malmgren went four-for-four for Willmar. Pitcher Hunter Magnuson went the distance for Willmar. Second baseman Cayden Hansen had three hits for Willmar, while shortstop Ian Koosman contributed two hits plus a run scored and an RBI. Jacob Miller led Sartell with two hits.

GAME 22

Rosetown 201 126 **11** 11 1
Burnsville 000 000 **0** 3 1

W. Thompson and Goodwin. Quimby, A. Thompson (5), Struzyk (5) and Dawson. WP W. Thompson. LP Quimby.

Will Thompson of the Rose-town Rockets shut out Burnsville 11-0 on a three-hitter Saturday afternoon on Burnsville's home turf. He had only one strikeout, as teammates played well in the field with only one error. Tomas Nelson and Jordan Dahlof led Rosetown with three hits each.

GAME 23

St. Michael **8**
Farmington **7**

GAME 24

Princeton **8**
Moorhead Blues **0**

Media at the Div. I State Baseball Tournament



West Central Tribune sports reporter Michael Lyne interviews Willmar Post 167 coach Douglas Ruter.



Weekend sports anchor Mary Rominger of KEYC-TV in Mankato interviews Mankato National Post 11 player Avery Stock, who had two hits and three RBIs.



Edina lefthander Soren Epple deals against the Minneapolis Lakers during a 4-0 win at Bob Bunnell Field in Burnsville on Friday.

Edina Post 471 squeezes through a rabbit hole

By John Sherman

Edina Post 471 had very little margin for error in its game against the Minneapolis Lakers Friday at Bob Bunnell Field in Burnsville.

To finish second in Pool 2, Edina had to shut out the Lakers and score at least three runs. Amazingly, the Hornets did both in a 4-0 victory.

When Legion Division I Director Bruce Young calculated percentages in a three-way tie between Edina, the Lakers and Grand Rapids. Edina's percentage was 0.47 to Grand Rapids' 0.52 and the Lakers' 0.57. It doesn't get much closer than that.

Lefthander Soren Epple, coach Gene Larkin's choice to start on the mound for Edina. It was somewhat of an easy choice because Epple pitched back-to-back shutouts in his previous two starts.

After the game, Epple was congratulated by every Edina player, coach, parent and grandparent.

He was quick to share the credit with his teammates, especially closer Tommy Schnell. "Tommy gave me another great pep talk before the game," Epple said.

Schnell could have closed the game, but Epple was cruising

on the way to a three-hitter, so Schnell didn't even warm up. Instead, he cheered from the dugout: "Nobody better!"

Epple was pumped after the game when verification came that Edina would advance to bracket play on Saturday. "This was my first time facing the Lakers, and they have a lot of lefthanded hitters," Epple said. "I felt comfortable out there."

In addition to holding the Lakers to three hits, Epple racked up 12 strikeouts.

"Soren doesn't crack under pressure," said catcher Adam Berghult, who delivered Edina's biggest hit in the top of the seventh. The Hornets were up 2-0 at the time and needed a run to secure second place in the pool behind Mankato National.

Berghult hit a gap shot into left center to score two runs. Then it was up to Epple to finish the job. He struck out the first two hitters in the bottom of the seventh, and then the game ended when shortstop Will Couchman caught a line drive.

"Soren could not have pitched any better," coach Larkin said.

Edina advances to play Maple Grove at 10:30 a.m. Sunday at Burnsville's Bob Bunnell Field.

Friday Stars of the Day

Kevin Rahe of Princeton pitched a complete game to beat the Moorhead Blues 8-0.

Soren Epple of Edina pitched a three-hitter with 12 strikeouts in a 4-0 win over the Minneapolis Lakers. It was Epple's third consecutive shutout.

Adam Berghult of Edina provided key RBIs with a double in the top of the seventh as his team advanced to the championship bracket with a 4-0 win over the Minneapolis Lakers.

Quintin Gonzalez helped Rosemount to a berth in the championship bracket with a 9-1 win over the Rochester A's. Gonzalez's line for the game was three-for-four with three RBIs.

Michael Ross of Maple Grove pitched a complete game to beat Hopkins 16-4 Friday afternoon at Burnsville's Rich Vanderlaan Field.

Chayton Fischer of Maple Grove had three hits as Maple Grove ended Hopkins' season 16-4.

Zach Benson's relief effort helped Mankato National edge Grand Rapids 7-6 Friday at Bob Bunnell Field in Burnsville. He struck out three and did not allow a hit or a walk in two innings.

Avery Stock of Mankato National went two-for-four with three RBIs in a 7-6 win over Grand Rapids. Mankato National won its pool with a 3-0 record.

Andy Linder of Grand Rapids went three-for-four in the Wolfpack's season-ending 7-6 loss to Mankato National.

Jordan Dahlof of the Rosetown Rockets had three hits and two RBIs in an 11-0 victory over the Burnsville Cobras.

Will Thompson's three-hit pitching was good for a shutout in an 11-0 Rosetown victory over Burnsville.

Jason Malmgren of Willmar had four hits and four RBIs in a 9-4 win over Sartell.



Minnesota American Legion 3rd District Commander Gary Richardson reads the Code of Sportsmanship before the first game on Friday.

Director Randy Schaub makes teamwork a priority

By John Sherman

Sixteen teams are playing ball in the Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. I State Tournament this week with Burnsville's Alimagnet Park as the main venue and satellite fields in Prior Lake and Shakopee.

There are two other teams at work, but neither has uniforms or baseball gear. Burnsville's host committee is one of those teams. The other is the Minnesota American Legion Baseball Committee, headed by State Director Randy Schaub.

Schaub works with American Legion Baseball district directors to make sure that all state Legion Baseball events are first-class and fun for participating teams.

"During my career as a teacher, I never had principals who stood over my shoulder," Schaub said before play began Friday morning at Bob Bunnell and Rich Vanderlaan Fields at Alimagnet Park. "If you have good people, you don't have to do everything yourself. Our directors all have different perspectives. It is a team, and we meld the personalities together."

District 2 Legion Baseball Director Vern Kitzberger of New Ulm talked about Schaub's leadership strengths: "Randy takes the job seriously and realizes how important it is to the veterans throughout the state that we keep the program at a high level. He is always willing to listen to your opinion, no matter which side on an issue you are on."

District 3 Legion Baseball Bruce Young, from Apple Valley Legion Post 1776, said, "Randy oversees Legion Baseball and let's every-



Minnesota American Legion Baseball Director Randy Schaub smiles during a chat at Alimagnet Park in Burnsville.

one do their jobs. He is very approachable and listens to what you have to say, so that you can come to a conclusion together. Most importantly, if there's a problem, he'll solve it."

Minnesota has the No. 1 American Legion Baseball program in the country — ahead of other Legion strongholds — Nebraska, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania.

"We would really like to get to

400 teams," Schaub said. "And we're close. I thought we were right there this year, but a few teams dropped out."

On the plus side, several communities have expressed an interest for next season.

Director Schaub's background in teaching and coaching goes back a long way. At the age of 20, he was already a Legion Baseball assistant coach in his hometown

of Albert Lea. He became the head coach from 1979-91.

After graduating from Minnesota State University, Mankato, Schaub began his teaching career in the small town of Villard. Three years later, he returned to Albert Lea as a long-term substitute teacher.

Next, he was hired as a teacher and head boys basketball coach at Alden-Conger High School.

Danube High hired Schaub to teach and coach boys' basketball. And Schaub had found a permanent home. He was also head volleyball coach. Like many small-town schools in Minnesota, Danube entered into a merger and became Danube-Renville-Sacred Heart. Schaub coached baseball there from 1990-2022. In 2002, he enjoyed his greatest coaching success when his Sacred Heart Legion team won the state Division II title and went on to take the Central Plains championship.

Schaub started in Legion Baseball administration in 1994 when Hall-of-Famer Rube Nathe asked him to help with the District 7, Division II Tournament. Later, he became District 7 baseball director. He was appointed a vice director of Minnesota Legion Baseball in 2020. The state director's chair opened the following year, and after some persuasion by Al Zdon of the state Legion staff, Schaub applied and became state director.

"I never thought it would be possible," Schaub said.

He applied this mantra from his coaching career to his job as state director: "Once you enter the ball diamond, bring a positive attitude."

Princeton third baseman shines in state tourney



Princeton players point upward as third baseman Tyler Peters joins them after their victory on Friday.

By Tim Engstrom

Tyler Peters, third baseman and pitcher for Princeton, was protecting the corner all night Friday and hitting well. His fellow players called him Player of the Game and went "Woot! Woot!"

Princeton defeated Moorhead Blues 8-0 last night.

His coach, Troy Kinney, said Peters has been great the entire postseason.

"He's been a playing at a high level right now," he said.

Peters, 16, pitched earlier, for four innings in the game Thursday against Rosetown. Princeton

defeated Rosetown 11-9, then fell later Thursday to Burnsville 11-10. Princeton advanced to the field of eight.

Coach Kinney said Peters is done pitching for the tournament, but he's been solid at defense and batting.

Peters said the reason he is playing well is love of the game.

"I just try to have fun out there," he said.

And what does he think about playing third base?

"It's a hot corner. A lot of balls are hit there. I like it."

The sophomore is the son of Justin and Tanya Peters.