



The Gazette

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St. Michael succeeds despite injury stoppages

The Mikes down Edina 6-1

By Tim Engstrom

The St. Michael Mikes of Post 567 battled through three injury stoppages in their battle against Edina Post 471 on Saturday afternoon.

They won 6-1.

"I am proud of these guys," said coach Jesse Hackenmueller. "They are simply playing for each other. They are hustling out there. They are putting it all out there."

Catcher Kaden Amundson sprained his ankle on the way to first base.

Second baseman Evan Saunders and right fielder Ryan Fischer collided.

And a line drive struck pitcher Zach Romans on his arm. It came shortly after he caught a line drive from the previous Edina batter.

There was no stoppage, but left fielder Drew Luster hurt his back when he tripped on first base and fell. He still was safe on a double play attempt.

Hackenmueller said he Amundson, a wrestler, he only had 20 seconds left of injury time.

And he told Fischer he's not going to win a battle with the bigger Saunders.

With Romans, the coached didn't have to talk. Romans demanded to stay in the game.

Romans, of Rogers, was walking around the park afterward holding ice on a big bruise. He said his arm had a lot of swelling but it wasn't major.

"Our goal is to go to North Carolina," he said. "We got to take care of business one game at a time."

Trey Sybrant stood out at the plate. He had three hits in four at-bats and one RBI. He scored one run. Hayden Olson had two hits and one RBI. Saunders had two hits and two RBIs.

Romans held Edina to four hits, two walks and a single run.

Pitcher Zach Romans insisted on staying in the game after a line drive beamed him in the right arm.



Wilson Magers comes through for Mankato

By John Sherman

Wilson Magers, an up-and-coming player for the Mankato National Legion team, pitched the game of his life to give his team a bid to the Central Plains Region in Rapid City, S.D., on Aug. 3-6.

Magers, the younger brother of Mankato's team leader, Louis Magers, pitched six innings of a 8-1 victory over Willmar in the State Division I Tournament semifinals Saturday at Rich Vanderlaan Field in Burnsville. His fastball was the main weapon against a normally high-scoring Willmar club.

How fast was the high school junior-to-be throwing?

"Probably in the mid-80s," he said, adding, "I might have touched 87."

Louis Magers will play for Minnesota State University, Mankato in the fall. Wilson is al-



Mankato Nationals pitcher Wilson Magers fires another strike in beating Willmar 8-1.

ready setting his sights on college ball and eventually would like to try for a spot in the pros.

"Willmar hit the ball hard a few times tonight,"

Wilson said. "But my teammates made some great plays. I tried to stay on the outer half of the plate." That, of course, kept Willmar's big guys from pulling the ball.

Zach Benson came out of the bullpen for Mankato National and pitched a scoreless seventh inning, although Willmar star Ian Koosman hit the ball over the fence, about 20 feet foul.

Wilson Magers feels fortunate to have a role model living under the same room. Louis is a big-time prospect, 6 feet, 5 inches tall with a big arm and a live bat.

"Louis really holds me accountable," Wilson said. "If I'm just sitting around at home, he'll get me to come outside and play catch."

There will be more time to play catch early this week as the Brothers Magers prepare to represent Minnesota in regionals.

1991 Twins
World Series
hero Gene
Larkin spends
his summers
coaching
Edina Legion
Baseball.



Recaps of the games Saturday in Burnsville

GAME 25

Edina 4
Maple Grove 1

Romans and Amundson.
Hentges, Schnell (4), Dobesh
(6) and Berghult. WP Romans.
LP Hentges.

GAME 26

St. Michael 7
Moorhead Blues 3

St. Michael earned a regional
berth with a 6-1 win over Edi-
na Saturday afternoon. Pitcher
Zach Romans led St. Michael
by pitching a four-hitter. Trey
Sybrant had three of St. Mi-
chael's 11 hits, while Evan
Saunders and Hayden Olson
each had two. Shortstop Will
Couchman had two hits for
Edina.

GAME 27

Willmar 310 010 0 5 9 2
Princeton 200 000 0 2 5 2

Hansen and Arndorfer. Krone,
Jensen (6) and Johaneson. WP
Hansen. LP Krone.

Willmar eliminated Princeton
5-2 in the first round of bracket
play Saturday at Bob Bun-
nell Field in Burnsville. Cayden
Hansen was the No. 1 star for
Willmar. In addition to pitching a
five-hitter, he had two hits and
scored a run. Hunter Magnuson
had two hits and scored twice.
Five different players contribut-
ed hits for Princeton.

GAME 28

Mankato National 10
Rosemount 0

GAME 30

Mankato 102 041 0 8 13 0
Willmar 000 010 0 1 5 1

W. Magers, Benson and L.
Johnson. Arndorfer, Malmgren
(1) and Etterman. WP W. Mag-
ers. LP Malmgren.

Will Magers pitched a gem
with an inning of relief help
from Zach Benson. He helped
his own cause with two hits.
Willmar's five hits included dou-
bles by Sam Etterman and Alex
Schramm.

GAME 29

St. Michael 104 010 0 6 11 0
Edina 000 000 1 1 4 1

Saturday Stars of the Day

Jack McCoy of Edina had a two-run double in the first
inning as his team beat Maple Grove 4-1 in an elimina-
tion game Saturday morning at Bob Bunnell Field.

Tommy Schnell came out of Edina's bullpen to retire
five of the six batters he faced in the 4-1 victory over
Maple Grove.

Trey Sybrant of St. Michael racked up three hits as the
Mike's eliminated Edina 6-1 Saturday afternoon at Rich
Vanderlaan Field.

Cayden Hansen of Willmar pitched a five-hitter and
helped his own cause with two hits in Willmar's 5-2 win
over Princeton.

Hunter Magnuson of Willmar was hot with the bat,
ripping two hits and scoring twice in a 5-2 victory that
eliminated Princeton.

Tyler Peters of Princeton hit a double for an RBI in his
team's 5-2 loss to Willmar.

Zach Romans of St. Michael pitched a four-hitter to
eliminate Edina 6-1 Saturday afternoon at Rich Vander-
laan Field.

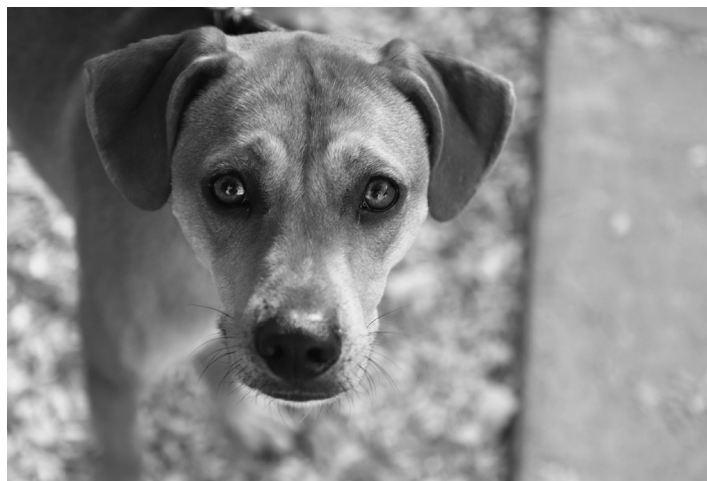
Wilson Magers pitched Mankato National into a Cen-
tral Plains Regional berth by going six innings in a 8-1
victory over Willmar Saturday night.

Division II report from Luverne

In State Division II Tournament at Luverne Friday,
July 29, close games were the norm for the day. Sib-
ley East edged Jackson 5-4, Tri-Town beat Dilworth/
Glyndon-Felton 7-4, Wadena shut out Luverne 1-0 and
Morris set down Chatfield 8-2.

Early scores from Saturday, July 30, were Jackson
over Chatfield 8-6, Dilworth/Glyndon-Felton over Lu-
verne 7-1 and Dilworth/Glyndon-Felton topped Jackson
7-6. Sibley East vs. Morris and Wadena vs. Tri-Town
were still pending.

Div. I State Baseball Tournament goes to the dogs



Mickey the friendly pooch at the Mitt Mender booth is a
mainstay of the tournament outside Rich Vanderlaan Field.



Osseo parent Mr. Kitzman heads for the Maple Grove dugout
with his trusty canine on Saturday.



Minnesota American Legion 2nd District Baseball Director Vern Kitzberger of New Ulm holds a pearl, a nickname for a new baseball.

Vern Kitzberger earns Hall of Fame status

By John Sherman

District 2 American Legion Baseball Director Vern Kitzberger was surprised and honored to be named to the State Legion Baseball Hall of Fame prior to the State Tournament.

In front of a 500-person banquet audience, Kitzberger kept his speech short and sweet, thanking the American Legion for the opportunity to serve the youth of Minnesota through baseball.

"I am just honored to be included," he said. "There so many great people in the Hall of Fame."

Kitzberger grew up on a farm outside of New Ulm, and grew up in the community's baseball tradition. "I lettered on the high school team," he said. "But pitchers often failed to hit my bat."

After high school, Kitzberger's interest in local baseball continued. His volunteer service to New Ulm baseball began in 2003. "New Ulm was hosting the Legion regional, and the baseball committee was expanded from 18 to 21 members."

Kitzberger wanted to give back to New Ulm Baseball. First of all, he's a community guy, and secondly he takes great pride in the program. "I am proud of our baseball history. It's a challenge to live up to our standards."

Kitzberger assumed the role of

venue chairman for the 2003 Legion regional. In 2005, he became New Ulm Baseball's secretary, and two years later, he was elected president.

The next step in Kitzberger's career was taking over for Dick Mueller as District 2 Legion Baseball Director in 2013.

"Dick had a medical condition in the spring, and I pinch-hit for him," Kitzberger recalled. For five years, Kitzberger was president of New Ulm Baseball and District 2 Director. He ultimately decided to concentrate on being District 2 Director.

"I was fortunate to work with Dick Mueller," Kitzberger said. "He always came to me to ask my opinion. He made sure I was observing. I owe him for all the good training he gave me."

With his appointment as District 2 Director, Kitzberger supervised district play and took on a key role at the State Division I Tournament. He has been a trusted, competent site director, sometimes working all four playing dates at state.

"I enjoy working with the other directors at the State Tournament," Kitzberger said. "They all have a passion for American Legion Baseball and look for ways to make the program better. Meeting coaches from around the state is one of my favorite things about the tournament."

Tommy Schnell closes Legion games like pro

By John Sherman

In Major League baseball, every championship team needs a great closer — the pitcher who comes in with men on base and slams the door shut on a victory.

Edina Post 471 coach Gene Larkin, who starred for the Twins with the winning RBI in the 1991 World Series, is well-aware of how they do it in the pros and he has applied the same strategy to Legion ball. It worked to perfection in a 4-1 win over Maple Grove Post 172 on Saturday at Bob Bunnell Field in Burnsville.

Tommy Schnell, an 18-year-old righthander, is Larkin's chosen closer. Schnell started some games for the Edina High School team this spring, but now has settled into the closer's role. He relieved starter Danny Geyer in the sixth inning with Edina leading 4-1 and two Maple Grove runners on base. With ease, he retired the side. Then in the bottom of the seventh, Schnell struck out the first two batters and got the last man on a soft liner to Will Couchman at shortstop.

"When Tommy comes into a game, I am confident he will throw strikes," Geyer said after the game. "I knew what he would try to do."

Schnell's role in the victory began long before he came in from

the bullpen.

"Tommy gave me a pep talk before the game," Geyer said. Schnell has become an unofficial pitching coach, making sure his teammates on the staff know their roles.

"It's easy to give a good pep talk when I know our guys will execute on the mound," Schnell said.

Geyer pointed out how great fielding gives the Edina pitching staff confidence. "If I make a mistake, there's a good chance my teammates will make the play," he said.

While pitching and defense gave Edina the edge over Maple Grove, offense came through at the right times Saturday. Edina scored two runs in the top of the first inning with singles from Adam Berghult and Couchman and a two-RBI double by Jack McCoy. In the top of the sixth, Edina scored its other two runs. Lleyton "Chop" Schmidt started it off with a walk, Kamden Chrysler followed with an infield hit, and then Lewis Meyer ripped a 3-and-2 pitch for a single to score Schmidt. Chrysler came home on a sacrifice fly to center by Berghult.

Maple Grove head coach Scott Ross said, "Edina hit the ball and made the plays. We made mistakes that cost us a couple runs."

The victory gave Edina a 22-9 season record.



Edina reliever Tommy Schnell closes out a 4-1 victory over Maple Grove on Saturday morning at Alimagnet Park's Bob Bunnell Field in Burnsville.

Host committee helps players make memories

By John Sherman

Burnsville's host committee has been working on the plans for a State Division I American Legion Baseball Tournament for four years, and finally the big day arrived.

"We were supposed to host State in 2020," host committee president Robert Weber said. But that year's tournament was canceled due to COVID-19 concerns. St. Cloud had been awarded the State bid for 2021, so Burnsville postponed its opportunity to host until this year.

Minnesota's baseball Directors are pleased that Burnsville hosted.

State Baseball Director Randy Schaub of Danube said, "Brackett's Crossing was a beautiful place for the tournament banquet. Mike Max and John Kriesel were A-plus speakers. Maxie is a pure professional who loves Legion baseball. John's story was inspiring. We have four outstanding fields [two in Burnsville, one in Prior Lake and one in Shakopee]. At Burnsville, you can watch one game and walk over to another game that's only 90 feet away."

Regarding the host committee, Schaub said, "It's always hard to get enough people to help with a tournament. This is quite an undertaking. A lot of the volunteers take time off work. Coordinating the State Legion Tournament is a lot harder job than people realize."

So how has the host committee met this challenge?

"I had an idea this would be a big project," Weber said. "Bill Streff helped run the State Tournament



From left are Scott Bauer, Jeff Olson, Robert Weber, Keith Bunnell, Bill Streff and Jim Meyer. They did a great job as the Burnsville host committee.

that Burnsville hosted in 2008. He wanted this. We looked at the financials and decided to do it."

More than 100 volunteers took part at the four fields from Thursday through Sunday.

"It's unbelievable how they have taken care of every single detail," said Bruce Young of Apple Valley, the State Division I Tournament Director. "There are always a few bumps in the road, but the Burnsville host committee has done an outstanding job."

District 4 Legion Baseball Director Gail Kalata said, "The Burnsville committee lined up four super fields. In addition to the two fields at Alimagnet Park in Burnsville, Shakopee and Prior Lake are excellent venues. There is a wonderful concessions stand in Burnsville with chef extraordinaire Bill Streff. The responsiveness from the Burnsville people to

any request is appreciated by the Legion Directors."

District 6 Legion Baseball Director Wes Thompson said, "The host committee has done a great job. They found hotels that are in one area and only a short distance from the Burnsville Fields. Normally, at a State Tournament, you have to drive five or ten miles to get to the hotels. The Burnsville staff is friendly and ready help."

Weber and Jim Meyer, who have done yeoman work on preparing for the State Tournament were high school teammates in baseball, football and basketball at Storden-Jeffers High in Southwestern Minnesota. "I was a pitcher on the baseball team and Jim was the catcher," Weber recalled. "I played baseball for St. Olaf and Jim played for Augsburg."

They are reunited in Burnsville and both had the bug to volunteer

their time to Legion Baseball. They had fun playing for Jeffers Legion in their youth and had a strong desire to give back.

"On our committee we have great group of guys who work well together," Meyer said. "Our goal coming into the State Tournament was to make this a memorable event for the teams. We have been blessed with a wealth of volunteer help. And the City of Burnsville went above and beyond to help us put on a successful tournament."

"Our city grounds crew has done a great job," Weber added. "They power washed the bleachers and concessions stand and put wood chips out [between fields] at Alimagnet Park. I have never seen our two fields here look so good."

"It's nice that the weather has cooperated during the tournament," Burnsville board member Jeff Olson said.

Moorhead Blues batboy brings heat from mound



Tate Bergeson, 10, throws out the first pitch for the second game at Rich Vanderlaan Field on Saturday. He threw a dead-perfect strike like it was nothing, then spit.

By Tim Engstrom

The batboy for the Moorhead Blues has been in the role for three years. He estimates he has done the job for about 80 games.

Tate Bergeson, 10, does it for games at Concordia College and the independent Fargo-Moorhead RedHawks teams.

He said he inherited the batboy gig for the Blues from his older brother.

"I took on his job, and my dad's the coach, so that's how I got it," Tate said.

His father is Bryant Bergeson. His grandfather is retired Concordia head coach Bucky Burgau.

"I like being around the field,

and I just like being around the players," Tate said. "It's just super fun being on the bus and going on the road trips."

The fifth-grader plays baseball two grades up, with 12U Cal Ripken Baseball. He threw out the first pitch for Moorhead's game Saturday. The pitch was a spot-on perfect strike.

Bryant said his son is part of the team's success.

"He's a high-energy person," he said. "He keeps the team motivated."

As a batboy, he chases down bats, foul balls, wild pitches, all the little things that keep a game moving. His mother is Rachael Bergeson.