



# The Gazette

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## Viking great Chad Greenway shares his story



Former Minnesota Vikings all-pro linebacker laughs after speaking at the Div. I State Tournament Banquet on Wednesday at Osseo Post 172. He told about his high school, college and professional lives, and said his high school sports experience was his favorite.

### Linebacker says nothing would have been possible without high school teammates

By Tim Engstrom

Chad Greenway would not have been discovered had his small-town high school nine-man football team from South Dakota not won two state titles.

“The bonds from my high school sports experience will never be broken,” he said. “My favorite memory was the locker room after our last high school football game.”

His advice to Legion Baseball players this week is embrace every minute, every second. He spoke Wednesday at the Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. I State Tournament Banquet.

An Iowa alumnus saw him play in that second title game and contacted Iowa Hawkeye coach Kirk Ferentz. Greenway would not have received a spot on the team if a player from Illinois had not backed out. Ferentz took at chance on this South Dakota kid after watching a VHS tape Greenway sent.

Greenway also is a product of Legion Baseball and played four sports during high school.

His advice to win in the tournament is: “The team with the best culture, the team with the best mindset, has the best chance.”

He said it is important for individuals to show up and be consistent in performance.



State Commander Carl Moon, left, and State Baseball Director Randy Schaub induct Bruce Young into the Hall of Fame.



Jim Peck, center, receives a recognition from the National American Legion for 61 years of service to Legion Baseball.



St. Michael Post 567's Levi Fry, center, was named Coach of the Year for his team's valiant run at the Regional Tourney.



WCCO Sports Director Mike Max emceed the Div. I State Tournament Banquet at Osseo American Legion Post 172.

# Excelsior tops the Scheels ranking

The ranking committee came out with its final Scheels ranking on July 19, and Excelsior Post 259 came out on top.

The team won all through its double-clim substate tournament, but then lost twice to Eden Prairie on the championship day.

The ranking committee all season long has been Div. I Director Bruce Young of Shakopee, Director Assistant Jim Peck of Chanhassen, Baseball Secretary Tim Engstrom of Bloomington, longtime sports journalist John Sherman of Apple Valley.

“We like to remind folks that this is a ranking, not a poll, and that we try our best,” Young said.

## Here are the Top 20:

1. Excelsior Post 259
2. Eden Prairie #1
3. Farmington Post 189 Tigers
4. Mankato Post 11 National
5. Bayport Post 491 (Stillwater)
6. St. P. Hamline Post 418 Purple
7. Prior Lake Legion Lakers
8. Forest Lake Post 225
9. Bemidji Post 14
10. New B. Post 513 Tri-City Red
11. Elk River Post 112 Elks
12. Fridley Post 303 Gold
13. Mankato Post 11 American
14. Wayzata Post 118 Wizards
15. Shakopee Post 2
16. Rochester Post 92 Redhawks
17. Northfield Post 84
18. Foley Post 298 Falcons
19. St. Michael Post 567 Mikes
20. Duluth Post 71

# 6 teams return from last year's field

By John Sherman

The parity in the Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. I State Tournament is reflected in the return of only six teams from the 2023 State Tournament.

Eden Prairie, the Rochester Redhawks, Bemidji, Duluth, Hastings and Sartell have won their way back to state. Eden Prairie finished second in state last year and advances to state as the favorite with a season record of 28-6. In an exciting Substate 4 Tournament, the Eagles needed to beat Excelsior twice on the final day, 7-4 and 2-0. Excelsior, the No. 1 team in Scheels' Statewide Legion Poll, finished the season 26-7. Eden Prairie was second in the poll.

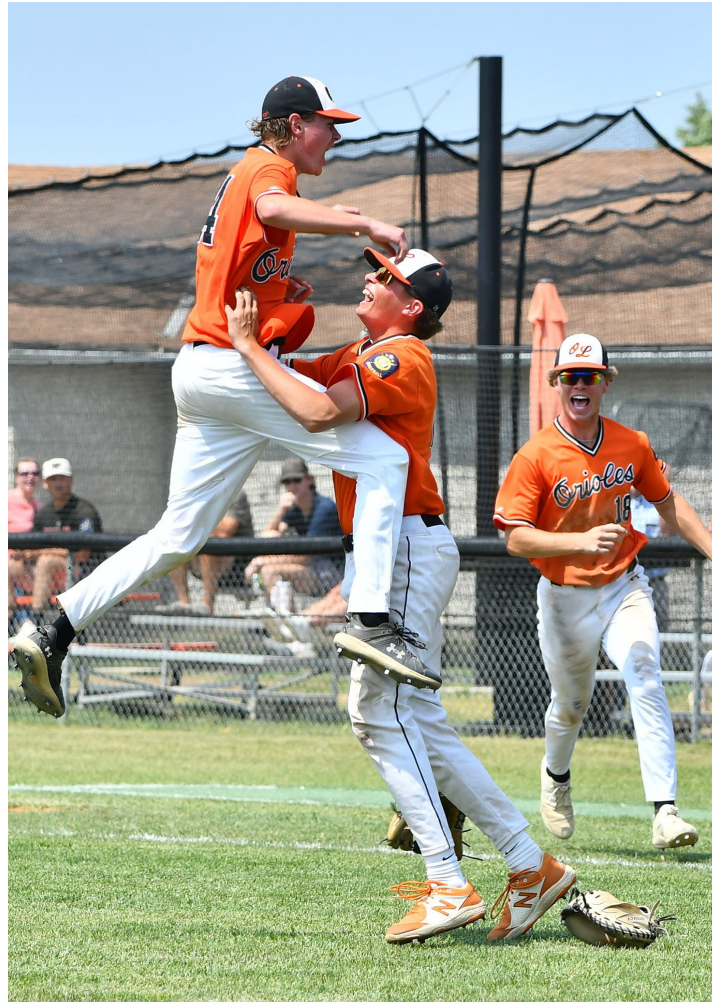
The Rochester Redhawks, who were the host team for the State Tournament last year, won their way to state, eliminating Winona LeJetz, last year's Substate 1 champion, 7-4.

Bemidji came through tough sub-state competition against two powerhouse teams – Perham and the Moorhead Blues.

Osseo, the state Division I champion in 2021, returns to state after earning two wins over Wayzata in Substate 10 by scores of 8-6 and 11-10. In both games, head coach Ben Johnson's Orioles came from behind.

All four of the teams in the Blue Pool at Osseo are newcomers to state. Joining the Orioles are Champlin, Farmington and Pierz.

The other three pools have two returning teams and two newcomers. In the Gold Pool at St. Michael are returning teams from Rochester and Bemidji and new entries Fridley Gold and Shakopee.



Sun photo by John Sherman

**Osseo's winning pitcher Brayden Haag is lifted high into the air by teammate Eli Larson after striking out Wayzata's last hitter in an 11-10 Substate 10 championship game victory over Wayzata. Rushing to join the celebration is Osseo first baseman Brenden Kranz (18).**

ee. The Red Pool at Gleason Field in Maple Grove brings back Eden Prairie and Bemidji to compete against the host team, Maple Grove, and Burnsville. The Silver

Pool at the Municipal Ballpark in Delano includes 2023 qualifiers Hastings and Sartell along with two formidable foes, Forest Lake and Mankato National.



**Graduates of the Year are former players. The Graduates of the Year are Jordan Post 3's Tanner Oakes, Tyler Oakes (held by Auggie Oakes) and TJ Oakes. With them are State Director Randy Schaub and Post 3 member Joe Bares.**



**Players stack their plates in the chow line at Osseo American Legion Post 172, during the banquet on Wednesday.**