

THE SPECTATOR

June 9, 2006

www.northstarleague.org

The wind always seems to blow against catchers when they are running. - Joe Garagiola, ML catcher, 1946-54

CATCHERS - WHO ARE THESE MASKED MEN

Whether they dig a pitch out of the dirt or block the plate from a charging runner, every team is looking for a standout player to put on the gear and work behind the plate. The North Star league has at least five of those premier catchers that can not only handle receiving duties, but manage a pitching staff, throw out would be base stealers, knock out hits at steady clip and basically lead their respective teams to the top of the standings. Below are brief profiles of five catchers generally considered an elite catcher.

Dassel-Cokato's Matt Bergstrom

Described as the "straw that stirs the drink", Matt Bergstrom has been one of the main ingredients in D-C's success over the last decade. He has a tremendous rapport with his pitchers, mastering the nuances of receiving and framing pitches to help his pitcher get the call. At bat, Matt has been leading off, igniting the attack. He utilizes his ability to draw walks and his talent for executing the hit and run to initiate the aggressive style of baseball. That has made D-C so successful since Matt joined them in 1995. In 2005 Matt hit .431 with 4 2Bs and 2 HRs. His early 2006 stats—.368 average with 3 doubles and 2 RBI from the lead off spot.



Maple Lake's Keith Jerpseth

A premier catcher in the league since 2000, Keith took on the job of player manager this year. His presence in the clean up spot and behind the plate makes the Lakers the force they are in the league. In 2005 Keith hit .324 with 8 2b's, 2 HRs and 15 RBI. He's started 2006 by hitting .300 with 4 RBI.

Maple Plain's Brad Mazer

A key factor in Maple Plain's consecutive trips to State has been the return of Brad Mazer. With Brad behind the plate, Maple Plain always seems to be in control of the game. His cat-like quickness and gun of an arm keep runners from being too aggressive. Because he spent time in the Northern League, Brad is only in his fourth year with the Diamond Devils. In 2005 he hit .371 with 3 2Bs and a HR. Off to a quick start in 2006, Brad is hitting .474 in league action, already has 4 2Bs and 8 RBI in the teams first 6 games.

Continued on page 2



Continued from page 1 ...

St. Michael's Derek Brant:

Derek returns to the Saints after spending a couple of years in the Philly's organization. His strong arm behind the plate can occasionally be turned into an asset on the mound as well. Tall and rangy with good running ability, Derek was well known for his defensive prowess in the league before leaving for a tour with the Philly's minor league affiliates. He's currently hitting .286 in league play and is considered to be one of the catchers to watch.

Mound's Peter Sycks

The best kept secret in the league is that the Malards have a catcher who belongs in the company of these other premier catchers. He brings a .312 lifetime average into this year and started 2006 with 9 hits in his first 14 at bats (.643 average). An anchor behind the plate who will also take the mound occasionally, the stability of having Peter behind the plate each game is a main reason for Mound's rebound this year. Peter is currently hitting .476 while leading the league in doubles with six.

"I'm not the manager because I'm always right, but I'm always right because I'm the manager."



THE CENTRAL



SAINTS ARE THE ONLY UNDEFEATED TEAM

Only it's the Saints of ST MICHAEL

Scoring runs in bunches, St. Michael remains the only unbeaten team in the league. Scoring at a clip of 10 runs a game and hitting near .350 as a team, the Saints have been near unstoppable to date. Four hitters in their lineup are among the division leaders—Chris Volkman at .571, Mike Freske at .464, Tyler Carlson at .385 and Bobby Kneefe has a .346 average. Freske tops the league in RBI's as well.

The Saints of D-C have only one blemish on their record, a surprising 3-0 loss to the suddenly rising Kings of Kingston. Before that stumble D-C appeared to be the team to beat. Although their team hitting has not been as strong as expected they do have 5 players Bergstrom, Birkholz, Pokornowski, Riewer and Larson hitting over .300 in the early going.

The A's are also in the thick of the race being beaten only once. In the fifth inning of the game versus Monti, the A's pulled off a rare triple play with the pitcher grabbing a line drive and catching both the runner at first and the one at second. Offensively, the A's have three hitters near

the top of the leader's board—Mark Peterson hitting at a .474 clip, Jeff Janzen hitting .444 and Kevin Jaunich not far behind at .438.

The fourth team above .500 is the Lakers. They are another Central team with 3 hitters above .500 - Chad Raiche, Darin Decker and Craig Fobbe who had one 5 for 5 game against Howard Lake.

The Huskies are off to a slow start win-loss wise with their only win coming in an 11-0 blowout of Kingston. Still, all of their loss have been close and they'll win their share before the season ends. Top hitters for Hutch have been Andrew Dammon hitting for a .389 average and Mike Kutler and Bo Miller both hitting .333.

The Central division has racked up a 16-5 record against the East and West. Not surprisingly, the division race looks to go down to the wire or at least be decided by head to head games against the respective Central division rivals.



MALLARDS IN THE HUNT



THE EAST

The resurgent Mound Mallards find themselves above .500 again and right on the heels of the Diamond Devils. They rallied with 3 runs in the ninth inning to beat Maple Lake 5-4 and defeated Rockford by the same score. Monticello was their third victim as Mound won that contest 5-1. Peter Sychs leads mound offensively with a .476 average.

Maple Plain should still be considered the favorite here by virtue of their 6-4 win over Mound and because their only loss to date was to the perennial power from D-C. But with Andrew Engebretson and his .385 average gone for June and July. The Diamond Devils will need more hitting from the rest of the line up. Brad Mazer (.474) and Adam Gregg (.400) are again at the top of the league in hitting, but no other Devil is over .300

The Villains are making each game competitive, with one bad play or one bad inning leading to their downfall in many games. Still they play everybody tough and have wins over Rockford and Buffalo to

show for it. Ryan Aaserud's .500 average tops the East with Dan Brant at .421 and Todd Klaers hitting .375.

The Larks apparently want to play as much baseball as possible playing two extra innings affairs. The problem is the Larks only win is the ten inning contest won 4-3 over Howard Lake. As usual the Scanlons, Brandon (.474) and Ben (.462) lead Loretto's attack. Reed Pawlek (.455), Ryan Schaust (.400) and Tom Traen (.313) are also hitting well early.

The River Bandits' early schedule included most of the teams leading the three divisions. So far they have defeated Buffalo 10-3, lost two 5-4 decisions to Mound and Maple Plain and been beaten by Central division foes D-C and St. Michael. Rassatt at .389 and Daugs at .333 are the only hitters above .300 for the Bandits.



THE WEST

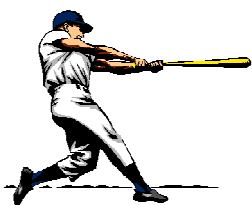
BULLDOGS RISE TO THE TOP

Expecting a slow start, because of their youth, Buffalo stands alone atop the West standings as the only team at .500 in the division. Nate Hill (.429) and Brad Weber (.412) lead the Bulldog offensively. Corey Braun has picked up two of the victories.

With a break here or there, the Orphans could be undefeated. Two extra inning losses and narrow losses to Maple Plain and Delano leave them one loss behind the Bulldogs. The Orphans season long goal is to raise their team average and early on they are hitting over .300 as a team. Now if they could learn to win the close games—Watch Out! Luke Gagnon, Andy Gagnon and Aaron DesMarais are the top 3 hitters in the West with Adam Koch, Tim Sonnik and Ben Borell all at .320 or better for the Orphans.

The Kings shocked even themselves pulling off the biggest surprise of the young season by shutting out D-C 3-0. After opening the season with 4 losses, they now own a 2 game winning streak and are no longer in the basement of the West division. The Kings can no longer be taken lightly. Billy Aho (.400), Alan Hendrickson (.368) and Derek Isaacson (.333) have the highest early averages for the Kings.

The Polecats were forced to forfeit their first game as they rebuilt their roster. They looked like they were getting on track with a 7-1 win against Albertville, but lost 4 more games before rising up to defeat the Bulldogs 6-3. Kevin Holker's .364 average is tops among Polecat hitters with Matt Loegering right behind at .350.



"I don't want to play golf. When I hit a ball, I want somebody else to go chase it." Rogers Hornsby





2006 STANDINGS (THRU 6/8/06)

<i>EAST</i>			
	<i>W</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>G.B.</i>
MAPLE PLAIN	5	1	...
MOUND	3	2	1.5
ALBERTVILLE	2	5	3.5
LORETTO	1	3	3
ROCKFORD	1	5	4

<i>CENTRAL</i>			
	<i>W</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>G.B.</i>
ST. MICHAEL	6	0	...
DASSEL-COKATO	5	1	1
DELANO	4	1	1.5
MAPLE LAKE	3	2	2.5
HUTCHINSON	1	4	4.5

<i>WEST</i>			
	<i>W</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>G.B.</i>
BUFFALO	3	3	...
HOWARD LAKE	2	4	1
KINGSTON	2	4	1
MONTICELLO	2	5	1.5

"Baseball is almost the only orderly thing in a very unordered world. If you get three strikes, even the best lawyer in the world can't get you off."

2006 STATS (THRU 6/7/06)

<i>EAST</i>			
<i>Player</i>	<i>AB</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>Ave</i>
R Aaserud Alb	18	9	500
P Sycks Md	21	10	476
Br Scanlon Lor	19	9	474
B Mazer MP	19	9	474
Bn Scanlon Lor	13	6	462
R Pawelk Lor	11	5	455
D Brant Alb	19	8	421
A Gregg MP	20	8	400
R Schaust Lor	20	8	400

2B Leader | **HR Leaders**

P Sycks 6 | Br Scanlon 1

B Mazer 1

RBI Leader

B Mazer 8

M Hokanson 1

KC Johnson 1

Top Pitchers by team

Name	IP	W-L	SO	E.R.A.
A Gregg MP	13	1-1	9	1.38
N Koch Lor	22	1-2	5	2.45
M Mitchell Md	15	1-1	12	3.45
J Lesser Roc	28	1-2	16	3.77
T Klaers Alb	25	2-2	11	4.68

<i>CENTRAL</i>			
<i>Player</i>	<i>AB</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>Ave</i>
C Volkman StM	21	12	571
M Peterson Del	19	9	474
M Freske StM	28	13	464
J Janzen Del	18	8	444
K Jaunich Del	16	7	438
C Raiche ML	23	10	435
D Decker ML	14	6	429
C Fobbe ML	20	8	400

2B Leaders

C Volkman 5

C Raiche 5

3B Leader

T Decker 1

HR Leaders

C Fobbe 2

B Kneefe 2

RBI Leader

M Freske 12

Top Pitchers by team

Name	IP	W-L	SO	E.R.A.
J Riewer DC	22	2-0	22	1.19
A McGrane StM	23	2-0	24	1.17
J Janzen Del	19	2-1	16	2.29
J Farenbaugh Hut	20	1-2	13	3.10
J Anderson ML	16	0-1	10	3.94

<i>WEST</i>			
<i>Player</i>	<i>AB</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>Ave</i>
L Gagnon HL	13	6	462
A Gagnon HL	24	11	458
A DesMarais HL	21	9	429
N Hill Buf	14	6	429
A Koch HL	14	6	429
B Weber Buf	17	7	412
B Aho Kin	20	8	400

2B Leaders

B Borrell 2

R Bethke 2

J Compton 2

D Burkholder 2

3B Leader

B Borrell 1

C Erlandson 1

A Stein 1

RBI Leader

M Donovan 6

Top Pitchers by team

Name	IP	W-L	SO	E.R.A.
J Streich HL	17	2-0	14	1.59
C Braun Buf	20	2-1	21	3.10
M Loegering M	11	0-0	11	4.09
B Dietz Kin	18	1-2	13	5.30