

# THE SPECTATOR

56th Year

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April 25, 2006

*People ask me what I do in winter when there's no baseball. I'll tell you what I do. I stare out the window and wait for spring. ~Rogers Hornsby*

## BUFFALO



2005 League Record 6-10

Players not returning:

*Derek Bauer, Eric Smolenski*

New Players for 2006:

*Tyler Anthony, Brad Weber,  
Keith Nygaard*

OUTLOOK— Historically, a slow starting team, the Bulldogs hope to build on their playoff run of last year. The pitching is expected to carry the team early as the young Bulldogs have 8 college players who need to gain valuable wood bat experience to provide the offensive pop needed for Buffalo to make a surge up the standings. Look for Buffalo to improve as the season goes along and make another playoff run.

## HOWARD LAKE

2005 League Record 10-6



Players not returning:

*Chad Burau, Kevin Werner*

New Players for 2006: None

OUTLOOK— The Orphans can pitch and play defense. Adam Koch, Jake Streich, Ben Borrell and Shane Heber all had an ERA under 1.85 last year. Unfortunately the stats with the bats were at the bottom of the league. If a few of the hitters return to form in 2006 and the team reaches its goal of improving its batting average from the bottom to the middle of the league, the Orphans will be tough to beat again in 2006.

## The WEST

## KINGSTON



2005 League Record 3-13

Players not returning:

*Bradon Grochow, Bo Miller*

New Players for 2006:

*Joe Buschette, Pat Rach*

OUTLOOK— Coming from no wins in 2004 to three league wins in 2005 is improvement. Can the Kings improve by another three wins or more in 2006? Like most teams, the key will be whether their young pitchers continue to improve as expected. Offensively, can they string hits together and produce run scoring hits in the clutch? If they do, they'll surprise some teams this year.

## MONTICELLO



Key Players returning: *Dave Burkholder, Dusty Decker, Alex Stein, Chris Hardie*

New Players for 2006: Unknown at this printing (still recruiting)

OUTLOOK— With many of the Polecats of 2005 not returning, Monticello will turn to many new and younger players and begin a rebuilding process. Returning are pitchers Alex Stein & Chris Hardie who pitched the most innings for the Polecats in 2005 and Dave Burkholder will be back to anchor the offense.

*I've come to the conclusion that the two most important things in life are good friends and a good bullpen. ~Bob Lemon, 1981*

## The CENTRAL

### DELANO



2005 League Record 12 - 5

Players not returning: *Brent Muckenhirn (p, if),  
Joe Lucht ©, Matt Griebel (p)*

New Players for 2006: *Andy Brown (c)*

OUTLOOK - Jeff Janzen returns with his 53 innings pitched and league leading 0.51 ERA, but the Athletics will be without 2 hurlers that pitched 56 innings in 2005. They are also replacing their starting catcher, but do return the division's top HR hitter in Jon Wilson. The Athletics will need to find pitching depth and remain injury free if they hope to gain a share of this year's top spot.

### DASSEL-COKATO



2005 League Record 12 - 5

Players not returning: *Noah Johnson (of),*

*Brent Pokornowski, (of), Parker Haffley (c)*

New Players for 2006: *Travis Johnson, Kyle Johnson,  
Andrew Carlson, Justin McKinley, Mike Marquardt*

OUTLOOK— The Saints have the unique problem of having so many pitchers, it will be hard to find enough innings for all of them. With that pitching depth and their usually strong defense, D-C figures to be in every game. At bat, the Saints hope to improve their attack by focusing on cutting down on strikeouts and using the whole field. Sounds like a fundamentally sound strategy for D-C to wind up at the top of the division.

### MAPLE LAKE



2005 League Record 12 - 5

Players not returning: *Dan VanDehey, Pete Goodfellow*

New Players for 2006: *Craig Fobbe*

OUTLOOK— The lineup looks strong. The Laker's outfield will be filled with athletes who can run, throw and hit well. The infield is comprised of veteran players including the 2005 Central Division MVP—Chad Raiche. Maple Lake's drive to the pennant will hinge on the pitching staff. Can Ryan Klingelhofer repeat his 8 win season of 2005 and will the rest of the staff be solid enough to hold off the rest of the division?

### HUTCHINSON



2005 League Record 7 - 10

Players not returning: *Mike Marquardt, Tim Johnson*  
New Players for 2006:

*Corey Ryks (p, 1b) Bo Miller (from Kingston)*

OUTLOOK— The Huskies finished just under .500 last year and hope to move above that mark in 2006. In order to do that, they need to score more runs. The pitching staff of Padnos, Farenbaugh, Heidenbrink, Runke, Rycks Kohli and Kuhl is very deep and if healthy will keep them in most games. With a few more hits, Hutchinson will aim to raise their team batting average and score enough runs to contend in the very competitive Central division.

### ST. MICHAEL



2005 League Record 9 - 8

Players not returning: *Joe Barbeln (p, if) Ryan Eull (of)*

*Randy Dehmer (1b), Charlie Bammert (of)*

New Players for 2006: *Derek Brant (c, p),*

*Kelly Krzmarzick (1b, of), Adam McGrane (p)*

OUTLOOK—Coming off of a second place finish in the 8B Regionals and a berth in the State Tourney, expectations are high for 2006. Veteran players return at nearly all positions, raising hopes for a run at the Central Division championship and another successful playoff run. Seven different pitchers collected wins for the Saints in 2005. If they find a "big game" stopper to replace Joe Barbeln, watch out for the Saints.

## ALBERTVILLE



2005 League Record 6 - 11

Players not returning:

*Mike Fleisher (p), Mark Johnson (if)*

New Players for 2006: *Ross Orrock (c)*

*Jeff Jarvis (3b), Pat May (of),*

*Jeff Peterson (of), Spike Anderson (if)*

**OUTLOOK**—Both the offense and the pitching improved as the season progressed last year. The Villains wound up 2005 with the fourth best batting average and the second most HR's in the league. The Villains figure to need continued development from young pitchers Ryan Aaserud and Josh Juntunen if they want to lower their High ERA of 2005 and move into contention for the East division championship.

## MAPLE PLAIN



2005 League Record 13 - 4

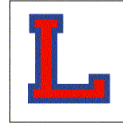
Players not returning: *Craig Hawkinson (of)*

New Players for 2006: *None*

**OUTLOOK** - If it ain't broke, why fix it. With two East division championships, 2 second place regional finishes and 2 State Tournament berths in the last 2 years, what will the Diamond Devils do to top themselves? The Diamond Devils return Adam Gregg and his 0.90 ERA, workhouse Pat McPherson and southpaw C.J. Goodwald to anchor a deep Pitching staff. Offensively, Maple Plain was the only squad with a team batting average over .300, returning Gregg, Andy Engebretson and Brad Mazer to the middle of their line-up.

*There are three things in my life which I really love: God, my family, and baseball. The only problem - once baseball season starts, I change the order around a bit. ~Al Gallagher, 1971*

## LORETTO



2005 League Record 9 - 8

Players not returning:

*Jay Schutte, Jake Spurzem*

New Players for 2006:

*Reed Pawelk*

**OUTLOOK**— Manager Herb Koch begins his 31st year in the North Star League with a team that can score runs with Brandon Scanlon leading the attack. They expect Al Koch and M. Ricke to provide good outings on the mound and by playing good defense and adding some new, young bats the Larks believe they can make it back to the regionals in 2006.

## The EAST

## ROCKFORD

2005 League Record 3 - 14

Players not returning:

*Scott Mauricio, Jim Rassatt*

New Players for 2006: *Jake Altendorf (p),*

*and a full season from Anthony Miller*

**OUTLOOK**— The River Bandits goal for 2006 is to have a winning record and make an appearance in the regionals. Lofty goals for a team that won 3 league games last year, we'll see. Their .274 team batting average proves they can hit with the rest of the league. If the River Bandits can reduce the number of errors that they commit and lower their ERA some, they may reach their goals this year.

## MOUND



2005 League Record 4 - 13

Players not returning: *None*

New Players for 2006:

*Chris Harrell, Chris Huggett, Eddie Kuntz*

**OUTLOOK**— The Mallard's goal is to return to their success of 2004 when they looked to be on the way up the division standings, finishing above .500. A good playoff run helped save a disappointing 2005 season. Mound will pin its hope for 2006 on young players who learned a lot last year and should improve. The whole pitching staff returns and can be effective if they throw strikes. Last year they led the league in walks given up and will need to keep runners off the bases to win games. Pete Harrell and Peter Sycks have produced offensively for the Mallards, but they need to find more consistency from the rest of their line-up to compete game in and game out.

## 2005 FINAL STANDINGS

<i>EAST</i>			
	<i>W</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>G.B.</i>
<i>Maple Plain</i>	13	4	...
<i>Loretto</i>	9	8	4
<i>Albertville</i>	6	11	7
<i>Mound</i>	4	13	9
<i>Rockford</i>	3	14	10

<i>CENTRAL</i>			
	<i>W</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>G.B.</i>
<i>Maple Lake</i>	12	5	...
<i>Dassel-Cokato</i>	12	5	...
<i>Delano</i>	12	5	...
<i>St. Michael</i>	9	8	3
<i>Hutchinson</i>	7	10	5

<i>WEST</i>			
	<i>W</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>G.B.</i>
<i>Monticello</i>	11	5	...
<i>Howard Lake</i>	10	6	1
<i>Buffalo</i>	6	10	5
<i>Kingston</i>	3	13	8

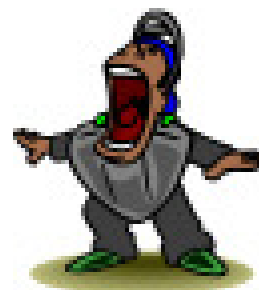
- **2006 East Division Prognosis**—the Diamond Devils remain the favorite with the Lark's hitting likely to keep them on Maple Plain's heels. The rest hope to win more than they lose as the Mallards hope to rebound to its form of 2004, the Villains need results from their young pitchers and the River Bandits work to improve their pitching and defense.

- **2006 Central Division Prognosis**— All five teams could again be contenders here, but we'll give the nod to perennial leader—the D-C Saints, because of their pitching depth. The Lakers project to hit well enough to win, the St. Michael Saints appear strong enough to contend, the Athletics need to find pitching depth and the Huskies could surprise all of them.

- **2006 West Division Prognosis**— The Orphans rely on their pitching and defense and could win it all with a little improvement at the bat.. The Bulldogs may take a few games to get started and will need to build up to another playoff run. The Polecats are unknown this year but they historically field a team with a strong blend of hitting and pitching. The Kings should improve this year, but have a way to go to contend.



# *Play Ball !!*



Progress always involves risks. You can't steal second base and keep your foot on first.

~Frederick B. Wilcox