

The 2007 SPECTATOR

57th Year

2007 Preview Issue
April 30, 2007



2007 will be the first year in 21 years that Dick Traen will not be presiding over the North Star league. He also spent 28 years playing baseball. Dick brought a lot of class to the league and everyone will miss him. We will be keeping Dick and his family in our prayers this year and on June 10th he will be inducted into the North Star Hall of Fame.

The EAST



MAPLE PLAIN

2006 League Record: 12 - 5

The Diamond devils are looking to repeat their last two seasons, winning the East Division and making a return to the State Tournament.

The key to Maple Plain's success lies in the middle of the line-up where *Brad Mazer, Andrew Engebretson, Adam Gregg* and *Brandon Schlinz* provide a strong offensive attack.

Pitching has been anchored by *Gregg and Pat McPherson* for years and young lefties *C.J Goodwald* and *Andrew Pratt* are coming on stronger each year.

The main addition to this year's team is *Lee Gregg* joining from New Germany.

A performance anything close to 2005 & 2006 should bring another East championship to Maple Plain.

(the EAST continued on page 3)

Baseball is the only thing beside the paper clip that hasn't changed.

The CENTRAL



ST. MICHAEL

2006 League Record 15 - 2

The Saints rode the arm of *Adam McGrane* to the division title and into the State Tournament last year. They return a potent line up with *Mike Freske, Chris Volkman* and *Tyler Carlson* helping to produce a lot of runs.

Derek Brant, Kyle Krzmarzick and *Brandon Valerius* are expected to contribute even more fire power this year.

Joe Barbeln returns and *Mike Hoelscher* has been added to the mix for 2007.

The Saints will be piloted this year by *Mike Freske*, who will have his hands full trying to match last year's record.

Beside losing Hall of Fame Manager *Roger Ketel* to retirement, the Saints will not have the services of *Grant Ketel* or *Kelly Krzmarzick* this year.

The prediction is that St. Michael will battle D-C for the division championship in a closer five team race.

(the CENTRAL continued on page 2)

The WEST



HOWARD LAKE

2006 League Record 12 - 4

The goal for the Orphans in 2007 is to repeat as Division Champs and make another nice run in the State Tournament.

Key Players returning: 3 top pitchers, *Adam Koch, Shane Heber* and *Jake Streich*.

Players not returning: *Chad Burau*, the veteran catcher & team leader.

New Players for 2007 - *Steve Bobrowske*, catcher and *Perry Thinesen*, LH Pitcher.

Expectations for improvement from Howard Lake are that productivity from *John Stueven* will return to 2005 levels and that young players *Luke Gagnon, and Steve, Lee & Tom Bobrowske* have gained valuable experience.

The strength of the Orphans remains their pitching depth and defense, a fact that keeps them in every game and the reason they are the favorite to repeat as West Division champs in 2007.

(the WEST continued on page 4)



DASSEL-COKATO

2006 League Record 12 - 5

The Saints of D-C rely on returning veterans like *John Riewer, Dan Birkholz, Matt Bergstrom and Justin McKinley* and newer contributors *Brent Opsahl and Cole Flick* to keep them at the top of the Central.

New Players for 2007: They have added Matt Carlson, Brent Pokornowski and John Hohnstein to their formidable stable of players.

As usual, the saints pitching and defense is expected to win them a lot of games in the league and they will be searching for more consistent hitting to add to their offense.

D-C always finds a way to compete for the division championship and has its sights on returning to the State Tournament and taking a shot at the State title. Don't count them out.



DELANO

2006 League Record 8 - 9

The Athletics return a core of players who could bring them back into the mix in the Central this year. *Jeff Janzen* anchors the staff, *Derek Falde, Jon Wilson, Brent Muckenhirn, Andy Brown and Kevin Jaunich* present a line up with a lot of tough outs in it.

They will need heavy contributions on the mound from *Todd Roth and Joe Nielsen*, the Athletics are also counting on more help from *Tony Greibel, Aaron Swenson, Garret Janzen, Adam Jaunich and Mike Elser* to help them climb in the standings.

They add *Jeff Marciniak* and lose *Mark Peterson* for 2007.

Delano relies on their pitching to keep them in every game while striving to improve their defense and come through with better clutch hitting would seem to be the key to earning them more victories this year.



The Athletics expect a return to their old attitude, veteran leadership, individual commitments and a new improved diet to lead them to a successful 2007.

The CENTRAL

"If we're going to win the pennant, we've got to start thinking we're not as good as we think we are." Casey Stengel



HUTCHINSON

2006 League Record 8 - 9

Key Players returning: *Chris Henke, Tim Thode, Jordan Schwarze, Luke Klitzke, Mike Kutter and Pitchers Corey Ryks, Adam Padnos & Kyle Messner.*

Players who could step up and contribute in 2007: *Chris Runke, Brooks Albrecht and Evan Kohli.*

New Players for 2007: *Brent Winter, Corey Trick & Justin Juergensen.*

The Huskies must tighten up their defense both in the infield and outfield and hope their young players can accomplish that. The Huskies main concern is bolstering their offense. On the plus side, Hutch is developing a pitching staff that consists of some veteran arms along with some promising young hurlers. If the pitching keeps them in every game and they add a little punch to the offense, they could rise in the Central division in a very close race.



MAPLE LAKE

2006 League Record 7 - 10

The Lakers rely on *Darrin Decker, Chad Raiche and Nate Johnson* for offensive production and solid defense. *Ryan Klingelhofer and Bobby Fobbe* will anchor this staff.

Todd Fuller at full health, *Marcus Zahn* at 3B and *Cody Decker* an improving catcher as he gains experience, are the players that the Lakers expect a larger contribution from in 2007.

Tony Smith will be rejoining the Lakers for 2007.

The Lakers have plenty of offense and team speed, but do they have enough pitching to wind up at the top of the division? If the Pitching staff allow the hitters to outslug their opponents, the Lakers could make some noise this year.

With a close race expected in the Central, the Lakers feel they have as good a chance as any to earn the first round bye and play their way into the State tournament.



"There are three types of baseball players: those who make it happen, those who watch it happen, and those who wonder what happens."

The EAST



LORETTO

2006 League Record 8 - 9

The Larks return a veteran cast including *Eric Schutte, Tom Traen, Ben Scanlon, Brandon Scanlon, Nick Koch and Mark Ricke.*

New Player for 2007: *Tyler Jerde*

If the young guys on the team can step up and make a name for themselves in the league, Loretto could make a serious push to win the division.

The expectations are that the experience in the Regionals will make them hungry and provide a team with a lot of veterans the incentive to put together a 2007 that is even better than their 2006 season.



MOUND

2006 League Record 9 - 8

The Mallards bring back a young core of talent that could spring a few surprises and has the potential to go a long way. *Peter Sycks, Peter Harrell, Luke Ludwigson, Grant Barthel, Andy Snyder and Corey Hawkinson* have all provided offensive fireworks and continue to improve.

Mound can also expect more consistency from *Eddie Kutz* at the plate and *Joel Utecht and Mike Mitchell* on the mound.

New Player for 2007: *Kyle Goodfellow*

The Mallards depth is becoming their greatest strength. They must receive good pitching performances from a young staff and find a little more help in the outfield if they want to move up and challenge for the division title.



ALBERTVILLE

2006 League Record 5 - 12

The Villains rely on veteran pitchers to keep them close every game and need to improve their at the plate and defensively if they want to move up in the standings in 2007

Key Players returning: SS *Dave Kerber*, OF *Jason Juntunen*, P/1B *Todd Klaers*, C/3B *Dan Brant*, 2B *Shane McLaughlin* and LHP *Josh Juntunen*.

Players expected to help more this year: P/Inf *Rob Jaunich* and 3B *Jeff Jarvis*

New Players for 2007: RHP *Drew Bebus*, RHP *Ryan Dutton*, LHP *Sid Finch*, and Inf *Mike Barnard*.

The only player lost from last year is Canadian defector *Pat May*.

Can the new players make enough difference? Can the Villains pitchers stay healthy? Will the hitters produce in the clutch and the defense look sharper? All questions that will determine Albertville's finish in the East.



Being an umpire is like being a king. It prepares you for nothing.

ROGERS

2006 League Record : New to League

The Red Devils expect to put a young team on the field in their first year in the league.

The plan is to build a tradition of baseball in Rogers and have fun playing baseball.

Assuming the team will consist of young players and players who may not have played together a lot in the past, we would assume their first year may not produce very many wins and will predict them to finish last in the East, but with so much unknown about their team, it may just be worth the price of admission to get out and cheer them on and have a little fun at the ball park this year.





2006 FINAL STANDINGS

EAST

	W	L	G.B.
Maple Plain	12	5	...
Mound	9	8	3
Loretto	8	9	4
Albertville	5	12	7
Rockford	3	14	9

CENTRAL

	W	L	G.B.
St. Michael	15	2	...
Dassel-Cokato	12	5	3
Hutchinson	8	9	7
Delano	8	9	7
Maple Lake	7	10	8

WEST

	W	L	G.B.
Howard Lake	12	4	--
Buffalo	7	9	5
Kingston	6	10	6
Monticello	5	11	7

The WEST



BUFFALO

2006 League Record: 7 - 9

The Bulldogs seem poised to put more pressure on the Orphans this year. Returning veterans *Ramon Vega, Kirk Nygard, Nate Hill, Corey Braun, Tyler Anthony and John Compton* bring more experience into the league than the rest of the West. New players *Luke Zumbusch*, LH Hitting *Ryan Olson* and Pitcher *Aaron Schultz* add more depth for 2007. The only player missing from last year is *Randy Bethke*, who is staying in N. Dakota for school. Buffalo continues to move up offensively in the league and play a steady brand of defense. If the pitching depth doesn't let them down and the team plays with consistency, expect the Bulldogs to compete for the top spot in the West.



KINGSTON

2006 League Record: 6 - 10

The Kings season hinges on playing at the level that helped the upstart the Central league teams in 2006. The pitching of returning players *Chris Picken and Brian Dietz* remains the key to the Kings success. *Billy Aho's* ability to get on base from the lead off spot ignites the offense. Kingston adds *Andy Finken* to the roster and loses no core players this year. They are relying on *Alan Hendrickson, Jesse Johnson and Ross Beckman* to come through as pitchers behind their main two.

Expecting the defense to be a strength, they need to improve their team average and find pitching depth to move up but should find themselves competitive with

Baseball is like driving, it's the one who gets home safely that counts



MONTICELLO

2006 League Record: 5 - 11

The Polecats pitching appears to be in good shape with seven staff members returning and three more with ability to throw strikes. How fast the young players in Monticello can improve and gel as a team remains the unanswered question here. *Chris Hardie, Jason Holker, Matt Loegering and Clay Sawatsh* return. Improvement is expected from 2007 grads *Mitch Loegering and Scott Iono*, in their second year of Town Team ball. Added this year are *Taylor Swanson*, IF, *David Baker*, LHP, *Kevin Markling and Mark Geyen*, both pitchers.

The Polecats youth makes them the most unpredictable team in the league. It would be no surprise if they struggle early and come on strong as the season progresses.



ROCKFORD

2006 League Record: 3 - 14

2006. *Ben Fontana* returns to play SS, *Chad Benchley* and a return to 2005 form of *Dusty Littlefield and Niles Lewin* could make Rockford a solid team in the West. The River Bandits chance of successfully moving up the West standings and reaching .500 hinges on their ability to get some pitching out of players other than *Lesser, Hanson and Anthony Miller*.



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