

The 2010 SPECTATOR

Say this much for town team baseball - it is beyond question the greatest conversation piece ever invented in America.

The North Star League schedule will be distinctly divided, each EAST and WEST team will play their division rivals twice and the other C teams once, a 14 or 15 game schedule.

The 'B' teams in the Central Division will play each team in their division twice and also Plato and Winsted from their section twice, a 12 game section schedule.

2010 Preview Issue
April 26, 2010

The 16 coaches were asked to predict the order of finish for the upcoming 2010 season. Listed below are their predictions.



2010 Hall of Famers

Herb Koch, Loretto

Herb played shortstop for Loretto for 34 years. Herb was a lifetime .300 hitter who also pitched in relief when needed. Herb became Loretto manager at the age of 19 and managed the team while playing. Herb served as league secretary-treasurer for 14 years and currently is league president.

John Timpe, Maple Plain

John has managed Maple Plain for 40 years, longer than any manager in league history. Under his guidance a new ball field was built in Maple Plain.

Mike Gagnon, Howard Lake

Mike played 15 years at shortstop for Maple Lake batting over .400 many times on his way to a lifetime .300 hitter. In 1995 Mike helped restart baseball in Howard Lake where he was playing manager. Mike won four batting titles and was named MVP four times.

Mark Forsman, Dassel-Cokato

Mark was a second basemen for D-C for 18 years and has managed D-C for 32 years. The Dassel ball park received a big face left due to his efforts. Mark also served on the State Baseball Board.

The EAST

- 1) Loretto - Clear favorite to win East.
- 2) Maple Plain - only competition seen for top spot.
- 3) Elk River - narrowly picked as best of the rest .
- 4) Mound - seen as slightly ahead of the other two.
- 5) Rogers - improving team, can they move up farther?
- 6) Albertville - More consistency & stability needed to win more.

The WEST

- 1) Howard Lake - the overwhelming choice to again finish first..
- 2) Buffalo - slight pick ahead of Monti for second.
- 3) Monticello - solid as the third place choice.
- 4 or 5) Cokato - Kings & Rockford seen as even choice
- 4 or 5) Rockford - picked for 4th or 5th in competitive division.

The CENTRAL

- 1) Hutchinson - the heavy favorite to repeat as champs.
- 2) D-C - noses out St Michael for 2nd.
- 3) St. Michael - Seen as virtually even with D-C.
- 4) Maple Lake - good, young players need to come through,
- 5) Delano - seeing improvement, still picked for bottom in 2010.

Baseball is the only place in life where a sacrifice is really appreciated

The CENTRAL



MAPLE LAKE

2009 Record 10-9

The Lakers return a lot of young players from last year. Jeremy Schmidt and Ben Jungers are two quality pitchers that will anchor the staff as they search for depth in the rotation and a solid closer. The Lakers hope their team speed and defensive play keep them competitive in every game. Their place in the standings should be determined by how well they learn to win the close games. Chad Raiche, Tony Smith, Nate Johnson, Marcus Zahn and Bert Marsnik return in the IF, Cody Decker and Graham Brown as catchers and Riley Decker, Tim Queck and Aaron Ras-sat in the OF. Mike Starke and Sam Marsnik will be counted on to contribute more in 2010 and the Lakers add Collin Grams (OF), Luke Fobbe (c, IF) and Mitch Wurm (P, 3B) to the roster.



DASSEL-COKATO

2009 Record 11-8

The Saints will count on veteran pitchers Dan Birkholz, Eric Hanson and Jordan Danielson to carry a young team through 2010. Matt Bergstrom and Brent Opsahl will be counted on to lead the offense with the hope that **Zach Lingl**, Luke Peterson and Brandon Opsahl will contribute more after gaining experience last year. A healthy Eric Hanson and the possible return of Justin McKinley would be a big help. The Saints are also adding new players **Nick Lingl**, Morgan and Quen Impala and Karson Forsman. The Saints will improve on last year if they can tighten up the defense and receive more timely hitting from a group of talented but young players.

A baseball fan has the digestive apparatus of a Billy goat. He can, and does, devour any set of diamond statistics with insatiable appetite and then nuzzles hungrily for more.



ST. Michael

2009 Record 11-8

The Saints expect to remain contenders with a lineup that includes Chris Volk-mann, Nick Volkmann, Kyle Krzmarzick, Bob Kneefe and Mike Freske. Mix in another year of col-lege ball for Blaine Barthel and Dane Carlson, add five new players – Max Ditty, Travis Kulla, Travis Ener, Wade Gorsett and John Wenner and the Saints should remain the high scoring force they have been in recent years. The question will be how well the itching staff comes through.

Umpires see with their eyes. Fans and parents see with their hearts.



DELANO

2009 Record 8-11

The A's have come on strong at the end of the last two years and hope to move that to the next level of making State. An experienced group of Jeff Janzen, Brent & Josh Muckenhirn, Mark Peterson, Andy Brown, Tony Greibel, Adam Jaunich, Blake Danielson, Jeff Althoff, Ryan Hayes, Aaron Swenson, Eric Sandberg and Stephen Snyder return and if the young guys keep improving, the A's should move up the standings. The pitching is strong and the hitting was much improved last year. Once they figure out a con-sistent line up, the defense should also come around.



HUTCHINSON

2009 Record 14-5

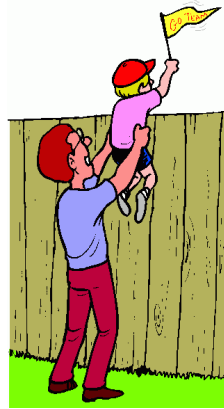
Starting pitching and defense up the middle are two keys to winning in baseball and the Huskies have both. Adam Padrnos, Justin Juergenson, Jordan Schwarze, Brian Meulener and Brooks Albrecht all return and with success from Kevin Kuhl, Luke Klitzke, Matt Timm and Josh Wendland, Hutch will be expected to contend for the title and a return trip to State. The question mark for the Hus-kies is what happens in the bullpen where the Huskies will rely on young arms.



MAPLE PLAIN

2009 Record 16-4

The Diamond Devils will go as far as their pitching takes them. If they have the veteran arms of Pat McPherson, Paul Kunz, TJ Aalid and Adam Gregg available and receive solid innings from younger pitchers Billy Soule, Judson McKown, and Tommy Fisk then Maple Plain should again be a contender. The line up contains a ton of solid, experienced hitters, Adam Gregg, Lee Gregg, Brad Mazer, Andrew Pratt, KC Johnson and Ryan Dwyer. The loss of OF Andrew Engebretson leaves a hole to fill in the middle of the order. The preseason preview again predicts that Maple Plain will be battling Loretto for the top spot in the East.



LORETTO

2009 Record 13-7

The Larks expect to start 2010 the way they ended 2009. With a good mix of offense and defense from Brandon Scanlon, Eric Schuette, Kent Koch, Nathan and Tyler Maher and the addition of Ryan Schaut and Adam McGrane, the Larks should be the favorites in the East this year. The biggest question to be answered will be how the pitching holds up with Nate Triplett gone and Tom Traen retired.



MOUND

2009 Record 6-14

The Mallards rely on Peter Harrell, Pete Sycks, Andy Snyder, Rob Moynagh and Chris Harrell to carry the load and the same will be true in 2010. Another year of college ball for Chris Harrell and the addition of Noah Waterhouse is expected to shore up some of the past pitching problems and with improvement on the mound and some better clutch hitting, the Mallards expect to make the move back up to a .500 or better record this year.

**If a horse can't eat it,
I don't want to play on it.**



ELK RIVER

2009 Record 7-13

A strong nucleus of Dan Ebner, Jason Rusch, Scott Levine, Ross Orrock, Tony Jarmoluk and Pat McCarthy return to give the Pioneers a good defensive team and a potentially strong offensive team. If they get added contributions from Corey Kaminski, Alex Halverson and new players Mathias Duevel, Brien Gerdes, Josh Juntunen and Lance Johnson, especially on the mound, the Pioneers will be a tough team to contend with this year.

A baseball park is the one place where a man's wife doesn't mind his getting excited over somebody else's curves.



ALBERTVILLE

2009 Record 3-17

The Villains have a history of having some good individual play and statistics, but few team wins. Their core players, Todd Klaers (P, 3B), Jeff Jarvis (OF), Dan Brant (IF), Corey Nelson (OF) and Ryan Klingelhofer (P) all return. If they can add in newcomers Aaron Moerke (IF) and Jim Althoff (OF) and receive strong contributions from Brian Lambert (P, OF) and Derek Kasper (C) they might just win a few more ball games. Mostly they need a stable lineup compared to their recent past and a few good table setters to get on base for their more consistent RBI men.



ROGERS

2009 Record 6-14

The Red Devils feel that it is time to make a leap in the win column and push the East competition. Counting on Beau Musgjerd, Josh Vidor, Eric Smith and Aaron Mead to provide leadership and produce runs, the Red Devils think their line up will produce runs and their defense can make the plays. The question seems to be can they get strong enough outings on the mound to pull out a few more victories?



BUFFALO

2009 Record 11-8

The Bulldogs rely on strong pitching and defense to stay close and have won a lot of close games the last few years. They hope to find a way to bunch hits together better to produce bigger innings this year. With the return of Jake Duske, Nate Hill, Derek Bauer, Corey Braun and Dan Wackler, the Bulldogs have a good core of veterans. Add in contributions from Ramon Vega, Tyler Antony and Carter Vogt and new players Jon Eurl (P) and Aaron Duske (C, OF) and Buffalo would once again be expected to compete for the top spot in the West.

Baseball is reassuring. It makes me feel as if the world is not going to blow up.



COKATO

2009 Record 7-12

The Kings move to Cokato this year and bring a number of North Star league veterans led by Bill Aho, Rob Swendra, Vinnie & Eric Pokornowski, Chris Picken and Abel West that will be counted on to produce enough to move up in the West. The Kings also expect bigger contributions from Bryce Benda, Kurt Salmen and their new addition, Morgan Impola. With plenty of pitching experience, the success of the Kings will most likely rest on their ability to hit in the clutch and avoid leaving so many runners on base. Add some youthful defense in support of their staff and Cokato could be one of the surprise teams of 2010.



HOWARD LAKE

2009 Record 14-5

The Orphans have four pitchers in Shane Heber, Jake Streich, Adam Koch and Ben Borrell who have proven to be tough to beat in the past and likely will keep Howard Lake in the running to win the West once again. The line up has proven to be consistent and in addition, they are counting on big things from college players Ryan Long and Cameron Lehner in 2010. Although they would like to work more youth and speed into their line-up, the Orphans experience on the mound and in the field always makes them tough to beat.



MONTICELLO

2009 Record 11-8

The core three for the Polecats in 2010 are expected to be pitcher Jason Holker, the team leader in innings pitched, ERA and strikeouts, Chris Hardie, the #2 pitcher and leader in hits and RBIs, and Eric Schreifels, an outstanding CF and bat in the middle of their lineup. Expected to contribute greatly in 2010 are Adam Brion, Trent Bestland and Michael Olson, each of whom will have another year of college baseball under their belt. The team lost Greg Holker for this year and will need to find more depth in their staff, but as a young group that has played together for a few years now, the Polecats would seem primed to move up and challenge Howard Lake and Buffalo in the West.

The charm of baseball is that, dull as it may be on the field, it is endlessly fascinating as a rehash.



ROCKFORD

2009 Record 7-12

The River Bandits expect Jason Lesser and Cole Hanson to log a lot of innings on the mound this year, which has been a good thing in the past. Add in Dusty Littlefield, Ben Fontana, Giles Hoel, Dave Kerber, the return of Niles Lewin, a healthy Andy Jorges and a new addition to the roster of Nick Main and Rockford's pitching and defense will again be strong. The River Bandits goal is to improve their hitting from last year, win more than they lose and return to regions.



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