

The 2011 SPECTATOR

That's the true harbinger of spring, not crocuses or swallows returning to Capistrano, but the sound of a bat on the ball.

2011 Preview Issue
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Baseball is religion without the mischief.



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

THE EAST

- 1) Loretto & Maple Plain – voted co-favorites, expect a tight race.
- 3) Delano – very close to top two, will previous 'B' experience help?
- 4) Mound – Mallards expect to improve on 8-7 record.
Still picked behind the other three by the coach's poll.

THE WEST

- 1) Howard Lake – Given the edge to stay on top
- 2) Maple Lake – close pick for second over Hutch & D-C
- 3&4) Hutchinson & D-C – tie vote,
both expected to be competitive in tough division
- 5) Buffalo – picked to be a notch behind the previous B teams
- 6) Cokato - Kings lack of recent success leaves them chosen last.



THE NORTH

- 1) St. Michael – Unanimous selection
- 2) Albertville – Best of the rest based on end of 2010
- 3) Rockford – More experienced than ER or Rogers
- 4) Elk River – Need to show better pitching
- 5) Rogers – Expected trailer based on past win-loss history.



Umpiring is the only job where a man "has to be perfect the first day" and "improve over the years."

The North Star League schedule will again be new for 2011.

EAST—The 4 team will play each other 3 times and the other 9 C teams once for 18 games.

WEST—The 5 C teams will play each other twice, Hutch twice and the other 8 C teams once for 18 games.

NORTH—The 4 C teams will play each other twice, St Michael twice and the other 9 C Teams once for 17 games.

The 'B' teams, Hutchinson and St. Michael will play each other twice and play each C team in their respective division twice

Those games will count in the division standings.

They will also compete in Section 8 with Blaine, Coon Rapids, and East Bethel. They will play each Section 8 team twice for Section 8 seeding.

The NORTH



ST. MICHAEL

2010 record 8-4

Due to the geographic make up of the divisions and being a strong Class B team, the Saints appear to be the prohibitive favorites in the North. They have a deep lineup that includes Nick and Chris Volkmann, Mike Freske, Kyle Krzmarzick, Bob Kneefe and Travis Enger. The Saints also expect improvement from college players Dane Carlson, Blaine Barthel, Enger, Travis Kulla, Jared Dehmer, Sam Boisner and Max Ditty as they add another year of college experience to their resume. They lose Scott Lekatz and Matt Lindenfesler. Outlook: Deep line-up and solid defense will carry them as they look for pitching depth. Expect them to win the North and compete for the top seed in Section 8.



ALBERTVILLE

2010 record 8-7

Albertville expects continued improvement in 2011. The Villains see themselves as one of the favorites among the C teams in the North Division. Pat Lenton, Todd Klaers, David Borchardt and Jeff Jarvis are expected to be among the elite players in the league at their positions. The pitching and defense showed deep improvement in 2010. With everyone returning, the Villains have high expectations for 2011.

God watches over drunks and third baseman.

Winners make goals, Losers make excuses.



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ELK RIVER

2010 record 5-10

The pioneers expect the same cast of characters to carry most of the load in 2011. They need good seasons from Dan Ebner, Pat McCarthy, Tony Jarmoluk, Jaime Brown and Jake Braun as well as strong contributions from Corey Kaminski, Aaron Daugherty and Scott Levine. The goal of improving their won-loss record will hinge upon improving their pitching, especially pitching depth, and a return to their hitting prowess of past years. Keeping key players healthy all year would sure help their cause a lot.

The greatest thrill in the world is to end the game with a home run and watch everybody else walk off the field while you're running the bases on air.



ROCKFORD

2010 record 5-9

The River Bandits strength should be their pitching depth this year. Returning pitchers Jason Lesser, Cole Hanson and Nate Hochmuth will be joined by Jake Gleason who is pitching college ball and Trent Bestland who played for Monticello in 2010. Andy Jorges returns behind the plate and Ian Keen returns from a year in the military. Clay Lanners is another Monticello alum joining the River Bandits. If they can get more production from the bottom of their line-up, they could be a strong team to contend with especially in an unknown division like the North.



ROGERS

2010 record 1-14

The Red Devils will again count on Josh Vidor, Beau Musgjer, Eric Smith and Marshall Nelson to be the constants in their line up and on the mound. They will look for more from Zach Nelson, Aaron Cook and Aaron Mead as they try to improve on their one win season and move to higher standings in the new North division. The Red Devils expect to add many new faces to their roster, build up the middle infield defense and strengthen the depth on the mound as they strive for more consistency and more wins.



The EAST



MAPLE PLAIN

2010 record 10-5

The Diamond Devils' strength is their core group of Adam Gregg, Lee Gregg, Pat McPherson and KC Johnson. Add in recent Orono grads Andrew Miller in the outfield and Judson McKown on the mound and newcomer Luke Hagen in the OF and hopefully you have another run at the division title. They will be looking to replace catcher Dan Boisclair and the infield remains unsettled going into the season. How the pitching depth holds up and what kind of defense they can put on the field will be the determining factors in how far the Diamond Devils go this year.

A hitter in a slump once said: "I would have jumped off a tall building, but the way I'm batting, I wouldn't have hit the ground."

L LORETTO
2010 record 13-2

Returning vets Kent Koch, Eric Schutte & Tyler Maher with Nick Koch and Adam McGrane heading the list of pitchers. Due to the retirement of Ben Scanlon and Mark Ricke and injury to Nathan Maher, the Larks expect Ryan Schaut, Luke Steinbach and Robbie Doboszinski to log more innings. they also add newcomers Randy Mosel and Troy Beckman to their staff.

Outlook – They hope to use a good blend of veterans and youth to overcome their injury and retirement losses and will need some young arms to emerge to add depth to their pitching staff. The Larks expect to continue their recent trend of contending for the division title and making a third straight appearance at state.

The other sports are just sports.
Baseball is a love.



DELANO
2010 record 5-7

The A's are looking forward to renewing rivalries with division foes Mound, Loretto and Maple Plain, but they will be without Brent Muckenhirn who retired, Infielder Isaac Wales and SS Kevin Jaunich, who recently tore his ACL. Players expected to sustain the team are Jeff Janzen, Mark Peterson, Tony Griebel, Andy Brown, Aaron Swenson, Adam Jaunich, Ryan Hayes, Jeff Althoff, Eric Sandberg, Blake Danielson, Josh Muckenhirn, Perry Ditty, Stefan Snyder. Young players signed the last couple of years include Matt Arens, Justin Pollak, Jay Stevens, Trevor Jaunich and Tyler Wolfe. The A's hit the ball better in 2010 than in 2009 and that has to continue if they expect to compete for the division crown. Offensively, they will be working on cutting down on strikeouts, something that has plagued this team the last couple of years. They also look to be more aggressive on the base paths. The A's weakness last year was on the pitching mound. What was once a strength, took a step back last year. A big reason for this was the amount of base on balls given up by the group. The staff needs to become better at throwing strikes as a unit to reach their goal.

M MOUND
2010 record 8-7
Chris Harrell emerged as the staff ace last year and the Mallards hope adding a couple of new, young pitchers, Dan Hoy, Mitch Dunaway and Pat Regan will help them improve on their 8-7 record of 2010. Offensively, they bring back Peter Harrell, Noah Waterhouse, Eddie Kutz and returning from injury, Mike Mitchell. Gone from this year's team is catcher Peter Sycks who moved out of state. The Mallards expect their pitching staff to keep them competitive and their hitters to get hits, they would like to see more power from their hitters and find a late inning closer.



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HOWARD LAKE

2010 record 11-3

The Orphans bring back a team full of experience and depth. Their biggest concern being the injuries to Shane Heber and Tim Sonnek. They add college players Cam Lehner and Steve Boger and pick up two former Monticello players in Eric Schreifels and Chris Hardie to add even more depth and experience to their talented roster. Returning to the top of the division and off to state will be challenging this year with the addition of three good former Class B teams moving in Class C and competing in the West, but the Orphans have the manpower to do it if things break their way.



DASSEL-COKATO

2010 record 6-6

With ten pitchers on the roster this year, the Saints are expecting to compete in every game even in a division as tough the West. They return Eric Hanson, Dan Birkholz, Jordan Danielson and Tyler Zwibrenner. The Saints are counting on Lucas Jourson, an Augustana college pitcher coming off Tommy John surgery, and two High School pitchers, Mitch Kurtzenburg and Andy Haataja. In the field, Dan Bergstrom maintains his usual spot behind the plate, Brent Opsahl is back at 3B, Brendan Opsahl is expected to contribute in the OF and two high school infielders join the Saints, Kyle Johnson and Quin Impala. Pitching depth and team speed should be the strengths of the D-C team this year and if they swing the bats a little better, they should be in the mix in the West.



MAPLE LAKE

2010 record 8-4

The Lakers have added a number of new players the last couple of seasons to the core group of veterans and appear to be a strong contender in the West. Jeremy Schmidt heads the pitching staff. Chad Raiche, Cody Decker, Tyler Decker, Nate Johnson and Bert Marsnik are key players returning to the Lakers line-up. Graham Brown, Riley Decker, Sam Marsnik, Luke Fobbe and Mitch Wurm are being counted on to also play big roles in 2011. Five new players, Mike Boyell, Mike Kloepfner, Rob Hannon, Brian Redemske and Derek Rachel have been added to the roster while Trent Zachman and Darin Decker will not be back. The Lakers are full of young players with a lot of potential, play good defense and use their speed to their advantage. If they can develop a little stronger depth in their pitching staff, they should compete for the division crown and make a run at a state tourney berth.



BUFFALO

2010 record 8-6

The Bulldogs offense should be their strength this year because of last year's nucleus, Jon Eurlle, Dan Wackler, Jake Duke, Nate Hill, Derek Bauer and Cody Kiesla. In addition, Corey Braun returns to the Bulldogs and Mike Olson and Scott Iano have been added from the Monticello roster. They count on the defense being strong if everyone stays healthy. Their success may hinge on how much depth they can develop in the pitching staff and how much improvement they see in their young players.



HUTCHINSON

2010 record 5-7

The Huskies are one of the two teams remaining in Class B. They will be looking for some of their starters to give them more innings with the hope they will regain their 2009 form and return to the State tourney. The middle of their line-up and their core players, Justin Juergenson, Brooks Albrecht, Tim Thode, Jordan Schwarze, Jarrod Zelm and on the mound, Chris Runke are proven competitors. They expect good years from Matt Timm and Justin Erkenbrack on the hill as well as from Ryan Kaping in the outfield. The Huskies need to replace the top of their order as Josh Wendland and Brian Mueleners are not returning. They also lose Andrew Dammann and Mike Kutter. 2011 should be an interesting year as they compete in the tough West division of the NSL and the newly reorganized Class B, Section 8.



COKATO

2010 record 2-12

The Kings have added three new pitchers, Eric Brubaker, Scott Robase and Cody Benson, who they expect will improve their staff enough to compete in the tough West division. In addition they expect Benson to be in the OF and newcomer Keaton Danielson to play 1B or catch. Adam Barnaal, Rob Swendra, Eric Pokornowski, Tanner Terning and Nick Corbin return. The players not returning in 2011 are Alan Hendrickson, Chris Picken and Jeff Janckila. The Kings expect Abel West back after missing last year with an injury and need Billy Aho to recover from an injury to help them improve offensively if they want to move up the ladder in the West.

