

# The 2021 Spectator

2021 Preview Issue



A game so fine it's played on a diamond

Manager's Predicted Finish

COVID 19 is still around. MN mandates regarding sports are still in effect. Wear masks, Social distance. Limit capacities for games. Strongly consider getting vaccinated so these mandates can be lifted.

North Star League teams return to a 20 game league schedule. One home game and one away games against each league team. Non league games are also on everybody's schedule again.

## Predictions

*For 2021, the North Star League managers predict that the 2021 standings will be very similar to the final 2020 standings.*

*The last three league champions are believed to be the top three in the standings again. Buffalo going undefeated in 2020 makes them the clear choice to defend their title. Scoring an average of 10 runs a game will lead to a lot of wins. Delano and Hutchinson both have scored a lot of runs and were champions in 2019 and 2018. The consensus is that the A's and Huskies are most likely to challenge for the title.*

*The next three teams were very close with Maple Lake being the choice for 4th and Howard Lake and Loretto finishing a tie as the 5th and 6th place spots.*

*D-C and Maple Plain were chosen as the main contenders for the 7th and final spot to earn a bye into the Regions. The Saints had a slight edge for 7th and the Diamond Devils were picked for 8th.*

*Litchfield seems to be improving and could move up in the standings, but the coaches made the Blues for 9th place.*

*Cokato dropped quite a bit in the standings last year and are seen as a team needing to prove they can regain the form of two years ago. They are picked for 10th with Waverly getting the most votes to finish on the bottom of the standings in 2021.*

## 2020 Final Standings

	W	L	Pct	GB
Buffalo	10	0	1.000	...
Delano	8	2	.800	2
Hutchison	8	2	.800	2
Howard Lake	6	4	.600	4
Maple Lake	5	5	.500	5
Loretto	5	5	.500	5
Maple Plain	4	6	.400	6
D-C	4	6	.400	6
Litchfield	2	8	.200	8
Waverly	2	8	.200	8
Cokato	1	9	.100	9

## The NORTH STAR LEAGUE

Masks should only be worn  
behind home plate.



**Buffalo 10-0 in 2020** Undefeated last year and returning everybody for 2021, The Bulldogs are expected to compete for a repeat championship. Jon Euerle, John Weber and Eric Newman return to work the mound with hope that Carter Vogt will return at some point. Offensively, Buffalo averaged about 10 runs a game with a line up consisting of Jake Duske, Colton Haight, Brett Renshaw and J.D. O'Donnell. Adding in the contributions of Kai Brisk, Roman Vega Jr., Noah Christenson and Ethan Hanson make the offense very potent. New players with lots of potential from the HS Varsity team are Justin Johnson, Evan Soeffker and Cole LaPlante.



**Cokato 1-9 in 2020** The Kernels have been the least predictable team the last two years, reaching the Regions easily in 2019 and dropping to the bottom of the league in 2020. Their defense was the Kernels Achilles heel and needs to be improved. Steve Schmitt has been the leader on the mound and will need to find his 2019 success for Cokato move up. Emergence of improved pitching depth will be another important piece of their success. The line up returns intact—Ethan Niemala, Tom Halonen, Bill Aho, Sanders Asplin, Austin Kantola, Grayson Londerville, Jackson Martin and Chad Koivisto. Jaeger Ohm, Dick Slinden and Brad Wheeler and newcomer Alan Pietala will also be aboard to help the Kernels return to their 2019 level.



**D-C 4-6 in 2020** The Saints will be without innings eater Tyler Zweibohmer and lead off hitter John Hohenstein. Filling those two holes may be the key to D-C's success this year and for that, they will rely on returners Jim Althoff, Tyler Brandl, Jordan Flick, Noah Halonen, Paul Jacobson, Collin Krick, Mike Leffler, Ben Lindquist, Jacob Niemala and Dylan Weber. Also being counted on are Cy Flick, Gus Flick, James Howell, Jeff Janckila, Nikolai Niemela and Paul Vetsch. Newcomers Ethan Brandel, Josiah Bullivant and Steve Boger could also help fill the Saints holes. When their young players come together, they expect to return to competing for high Region seeds and a return to State.



**Delano 8-2 in 2020** The A's return a powerful explosive lineup that features Hunter Hart, Toby Hanson, Trevor Jaunich, Jack Paulson, James Otto, Brady Miller Nate Norman, Adam Schleper, and Tanner Kroells. With Max Otto and Cade Lommel not returning for 2021, the pitching load will fall to Jeremy Maschino, Jake Gleason, Matt Arens and Jackson Royer. More playing time and bigger contributions are expected from Jake Nelson and Reno Bredahl as well as new players Carson Tschudi and Michael Weber. Like the last two years, Delano is likely to score a lot and if the pitching comes through, they should contend for the top spot.



I never questioned the  
integrity of an umpire.  
Their eyesight, yes.



The NORTH STAR LEAGUE

You can sum up the game of baseball in one word: "You never know"

**Howard Lake 6-4 in 2020** Mike Dockendorf and Jared Koch anchor a staff that has long been one of the top staffs in the league. Returning to their lineup are starters Mitch Baumann, Jake Gruenhagen, Alex Baumann, Zach Kuefler, Brad Bickmann, Matt Streich and Brock Goelz. Noah Bush is expected to play more and contribute along with other young players and a few new High school players. Like many other recent seasons, the Orphans will rely on their pitching and defense to take them to another competitive winning season.



**Hutchinson 8-2 in 2020** The Huskies have been in the top three in the standings the last three years and expect their veteran lineup and staff will keep them up there. They return Jayden Fleck, Tyler Schiller, Dan Van De Steeg, Jeremiah Van De Steeg Lane Glaser, Marcus Hahn, Cody Arlt and Matt Piechowski. Add in contributions from Mitchell Reiner and Brady Zachrison and new players Billy Marquardt, Ty Glaser, Jon DeRock and Zach Kuseske and Hutchinson should field a strong offensive lineup. With most of their staff returning, the Huskies are a good bet to be in the top part of the leagues standings.

**Litchfield 2-8 in 2020** The Blues bring back Owen Boerema, the reigning MV Pitcher to lead their staff and their hopes of moving up in the standings. A bunch of veterans return - Jake Jones, Andrew Loch, Brady Smith, Joey Hyde, Cody Klabunde, Gabe Lecher and Dylan Koll. While Litchfield's pitching has gotten stronger, they are looking for more consistency offensively, needing to score more runs to win games. needs to find more consistency offensively to score more runs. Other players on the roster that could supply that extra offense are Jack Ramthun, Avery Liesmann, Ben Alsleben, Bennett Lecher and new additions Josh Johnson, Mikey Spreiter, Hunter Thiel and Winky Estrada.

**Loretto 5-5 in 2020** The Larks are mixture of experience and youth. Eric Schutte, Kent Koch, Tyler Maher, Nathan Maher and Colton Petron bring a ton of North Star League experience to the Larks. Younger players that are making a difference in Loretto are Keenan Hodgkin, Donny Schroeder, Tyler Gearin, Bradley Koskie, Will Reschenberg, Nick Kay, Charles Engdahl and Ben Leuthner. New players Brandan Brolin and Derek Ritter join returning Larks Drew VanDehey and George Faue to add more youth, more experience and more depth. The Larks should field a competitive team and if youth can mesh with experience consistently, they can contend for the top spots in the seedings for Regions.

EAT.  
SLEEP.  
BASEBALL.  
REPEAT.



"HE HITS FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE PLATE.  
HE'S AMPHIBIOUS."  
YOGI BERRA



Never give up.  
The last swing  
could win the game.

**Hall of Fame—Class of 2021**

<b>Brent Opsahl - D-C</b>	<b>Adam Gregg - Maple Plain</b>
<b>Andy Snyder - Mound</b>	<b>Ramon Vega - Buffalo</b>



The two most important things in life are good friends and a strong bullpen

*Baseball must be a great game to survive the fools who run it.*



**Maple Lake 5-5 in 2020** The Lakers expect Hunter Malachek back on the mound which only strengthens their staff, which has been a team strength for years. Also back for what has been a formidable lineup are Matt Bergstrom, Riley Decker, Donnie Mavencamp, Mitch Wurm, Luke Fobbe, Derek Rachel and Logan Orazem. Ben Goelz and Been Clapp are coming off good years in 2020 and only add more depth to an already deep team. The Lakers should be a competitive all year long and look like a contender this year.



**Maple Plain 4-6 in 2020** The Diamond Devils will be without K.C. Johnson, Billy Soule, and Danny Fafinski in 2021, but return the rest of their lineup. Pitching duties will be spread out among Judson McKown, Kyle Bode, Max Marshall and Lance Reynolds. TJ Carlson at catcher and Mike Frericks figure to lead the offense with improvement from Logan Kinsel, Tommy Traen, Calvin Rippberger, Colton Peters, Jake Hartmann and Kevin Kvern being counted on to keep them in contention. A graduating senior or two may still be added to the roster.



**Montrose/Waverly 2-8 in 2020** For the first time, the Stingers finished outside of the cellar, winning on the final day of 2020 to move up a spot. 2021 will be a challenge as they will be without some big contributors—Ben Kunz, Alex smothers, Jason Slivek, Elliot Hellman and pitcher J.T. Weiman are not returning. They have added Jacob Noor, Will Ricki and Brandon Walker to their core of Kirby Moynagh, Andrew Moynagh, Brady Boeddecker and Bill Aamodt. A young roster without a lot innings eaters should make it hard to continue their climb up the standings.

I knew when my career was over.  
In 1965 my baseball card came out with no picture.  
Bob Uecker



**“ They broke it to me gently.  
The manager came up to me before a game and told me they didn’t allow visitors in the clubhouse”  
Bob Uecker**