



North Star League Mid-Season Report and (Mock) All Star Game

#1-Buffalo Bulldogs (12-2)

What's left: 1-home, 5-road

Maple Lake, at Howard Lake, at Litchfield, at Hutchinson, at Loretto, at Waverly

Top hitter: Jake Duske - .442 BA

Top pitcher: John Weber – 1.63 ERA

Outlook: Buffalo only has 1 home game remaining, however its only two loses were at home. They seem to thrive away from Historic Bentfield Mills, and currently hold a two-game lead in the loss column over Delano as they own the tie breaker. I don't see Buffalo skipping a beat to finish the season though, they have two tough road games with Hutchinson, whom stole one from them in Buffalo, and at Loretto; which is never an easy place to win. Loretto was up 10-3 on Buffalo before a huge comeback win for the Bulldogs. Buffalo will be hard to catch with only 6 games to go.

#2-Delano Athletics (10-3)

What's left: 5-home, 2-road

Maple Lake, at Maple Plain, Dassel-Cokato, at Maple Lake, Howard Lake, Hutchinson, Litchfield

Top hitter: Toby Hanson - .511 BA

Top pitcher: Jermey Maschino – 2.43 ERA

Outlook: If you look at Delano's home vs. away record overall (including non-league games) their home record is sitting around .500. This doesn't sit well as they have 5 home games left including hosting regions. Fortunately for Delano a couple of those opponents are pretty easy to get UP for. The Athletics have a strong and deep pitching staff, and to this point, have played solid defense, add in the fact that they are veteran team, though still rather young is going to make them tough to beat in the stretch run. Delano will have to tighten things up and play better at home if they want to stay in the two spot or even catch Buffalo.

#3-Loretto Larks (9-4)

What's left: 5-home, 2-road

Waverly, Howard Lake, Litchfield, at Waverly, Buffalo, at Maple Lake, Hutchinson

Top hitter: Tyler Maher - .400 BA

Top pitcher: Colton Petron - 2.10 ERA

Outlook: I made mention at the end of last year that the Larks were building towards something special during the second half of last years shortened season and were mere outs away from state in 2020. Loretto played a tough schedule to open the season and was floating around .500 early on, but have gotten hot going in to the 4th of July break. The Larks lost heartbreakers to Howard Lake and Buffalo, otherwise they'd be in the driver's seat. They get to redeem themselves against those two as well as having a big showdown at home v. Hutchinson with a top seed in regions on the line.

#4-Hutchinson Huskies (7-4)

What's left: 5-home, 4-road

Howard Lake, at Cokato, Buffalo, Dassel-Cokato, Maple Plain, Cokato, at Maple Lake, at Delano, at Loretto

Top hitter: Jayden Fleck - .395 BA

Top pitcher: John DeRock – 2.92 ERA

Outlook: Hutchinson has the most games left to play in the league, and it won't be an easy task as they have trips to Delano, Loretto and Maple Lake left and Buffalo coming to town who plays extremely well on the road. Fortunately Hutch always seems to have the hitting to carry them through the dog days of summer when pitching starts to wear thin league wide. The Huskies, like many other teams need to get some solid performances out of their pitching staff if they intend to stay near the top of the standings.

#5 (tie)-Maple Lake Lakers (7-5)

What's left: 4-home, 4-road

Loretto, Hutchinson, Delano, at Buffalo, Howard Lake, at Maple Plain, at Waverly, at Delano

Top hitter: Ben Reilley - .457 BA

Top pitcher: Ben Reilley - 4.15 ERA

Outlook: Maple Lake looks to have the toughest schedule down the stretch with 5 of their opponents tied or higher than them in the standings, and Maple Plain on a steady rise. The Lakers will need some consistency out of their pitching staff and cut back on the walks if they want to stay above .500. Their lineup and defense are solid, and they have some great veteran presence to help them through the stretch run in July.

#5(tie)Howard Lake Orphans (7-5)

What's left: 3-home, 5-road

Buffalo, Maple Plain, at Hutchinson, at Loretto, at Maple Lake, Waverly, at Maple Plain, at Delano

Top hitter: Noah Bush - .371

Top pitcher: Jared Koch - 2.23 ERA

Outlook: The Orphans need to find some production at the plate during the last month of the year especially with road games at Hutch, Loretto Maple Lake, and Delano left. Jared Koch has carried the staff as Mike Dockendorf starts to come back from injury. If they can get him healthy and use Noah Bush consistently on the mound, Howard Lake could still be a scary team to run in down the stretch.

#7-Litchfield Blues (5-7)

What's left: 5-home, 3-road

Waverly, at Dassel-Cokato, Buffalo, Cokato, at Loretto, Dassel-Cokato, Maple Plain, at Delano

Top hitter: Cody Klabunde - .415

Top pitcher: Joey Hyde - 4.97

Outlook: Litchfield is holding on to that #7 seed for dear life. They have some big games coming up with Maple Plain, Dassel-Cokato (2), and Cokato that will help us shake out who gets that final spot in regions without having to play in the league playoffs. Or..... We'll be using all of the tie breakers. The Blues are much improved this year as they don't seem to be the new guys in town anymore and an opponent that needs to be taken seriously. Litchfield, much like Howard Lake will need to clutch up at the plate down the stretch if they want to get in to regions.

#8-Cokato Kernels (6-10)

What's left: 1-home, 3-road

Hutchinson, at Waverly, at Litchfield, at Hutchinson

Top hitter: Isaac Nelson - .452

Top pitcher: Steve Schmitt - 4.37 ERA

Outlook: One thing Cokato has going against them is they only have four games left. This will make it tough to gain ground on teams ahead of them in the standings and will have to rely on other teams losing. It won't help that two of those games are against Hutchinson. Cokato has a tough top three hitters in its lineup, but will need the pitching staff to step up if they want avoid the bottom four.

#9-Maple Plain Diamond Devils (4-9)

What's left: 4-home, 3-road

Dassel-Cokato, at Litchfield, Howard Lake, at Hutchinson, Delano, Maple Lake, at Howard Lake

Top hitter: Calvin Rippberger - .415

Top pitcher: Kyle Bode - 8.64 ERA

Outlook: If any of the teams with 5+ loses in the league can make a run up the standings it is going to be Maple Plain. They are young, athletic, and can swing it. They've found a good #1 pitcher in Kyle Bode whom they can rely on to take the ball once a week, throw 9, and put them in position to win. Their schedule won't be easy, but it won't be daunting either. The story of the Diamond Devils has always been Can they get their starting 9 to the ballpark consistently? Looking at the box scores, it appears that they do have a solid core in the lineup each night.

#10-Dassel-Cokato Saints (4-11)

What's left: 1-home, 4-road

Litchfield, at Hutchinson, at Delano, at Litchfield, at Maple Plain

Top hitter: Jim Althoff - .417

Top pitcher: Jordan Flick - 3.72 ERA

Outlook: The Saints have a lot of work to do. And they will have to do so away from the friendly confines of Saints Field, and if they cannot get out of tenth place, they won't be hosting any playoff games either. Boger and Althoff have been studs at the plate for D-C, but they need someone to step up as a viable number two arm behind Flick, and the Saints need to start to win the games Flick throws as well.

#11-Waverly Stingers (1-12)

What's left: 4-home, 3-road

at Loretto, Maple Lake, Cokato, at Howard Lake, Loretto, at Litchfield, Buffalo

Top hitter: Cole Hansen - .306

Top pitcher: Bill Aamodt - 8.71 ERA

Outlook: The Stingers have some work to do if they want to avoid finishing in last place. Their new crop of youngsters is really going to have to step up to finish the season off. Currently they are three back in the win column to D-C and cannot make up any ground with a head to head matchup the rest of the way. The Stingers showed some signs early on in the season picking up some good non-league wins, but have struggled in league play.