

The 2023 Spectator

2023
Preview
Issue

Manager's Predicted Finish

For 2023 the North Star League managers again have made their predictions for the order of finish in the standings.

Delano is expected to come out on top again as every manager (except Delano's) predicted them to be first or second.

Hutchinson was picked first or second by eight of the 12 Managers so comes out as the 2nd place pick.

Maple Lake is picked anywhere from second to fifth and ending up as the choice for third place.

Litchfield is predicted to be fourth, being slotted in the 2nd to 6th spots, mostly 4's

Loretto and Buffalo tied for the 5th and 6th spots to wrap up the predicted top half the standings.

Howard Lake is predicted to take the important 7th spot. Important because the top 7 finishers go straight to the Regions.

D-C came in 8th with all managers expecting them to be 7th, 8th, 9th or 10th.

Cokato was also selected for those 4 spots in the standings with a few more 9's than anything else.

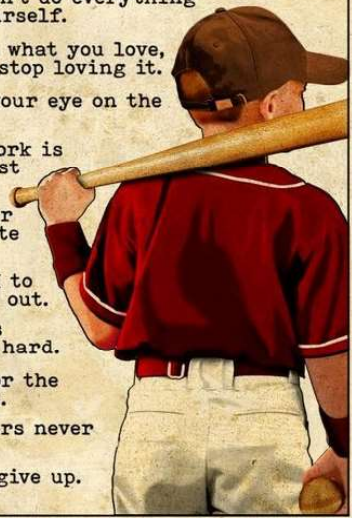
Maple Plain was consistently identified as 8th thru 11th leaving them in 10th place in the pecking order.

In its second year, Rockford was usually picked 10th or 11th but ended up 11th in total points.

Montrose/Waverly was the unanimous choice to finish last. Once again, they will need to prove to the league managers that they have improved before they receive predictions of moving higher in the standings.

BASEBALL LIFE LESSONS

1. Sacrifice is necessary in the most crucial moments.
2. Your brain is your most important muscle.
3. You can't do everything by yourself.
4. If it's what you love, never stop loving it.
5. Keep your eye on the ball.
6. Teamwork is the best work.
7. Do your absolute best.
8. It's OK to strike out.
9. Always swing hard.
10. Aim for the fences.
11. Cheaters never win.
12. Never give up.



2022 Final Standings

	W	L	Pct	GB
Delano	20	2	.909	...
Hutchinson	19	3	.864	1
Maple Lake	16	6	.727	4
Litchfield	16	6	.727	4
Buffalo	13	9	.591	7
Howard Lake	13	9	.591	7
Cokato	10	12	.455	10
Loretto	8	14	.364	12
D-C	6	16	.273	14
Maple Plain	5	17	.227	15
Rockford	4	18	.182	16
Montrose	2	20	.091	18

The NORTH STAR LEAGUE

Life's a Pitch.



Buffalo 13-9 in 2022 The Bulldogs have missed going to state the last two years and aim to get back to the top in 2023. Jon Eurlle and John Weber return as mainstays on the hill. They have a strong, deep line-up led by Colton Haight, J.D. O'Donnell, Kal Brisk and Justin Johnson. In addition Ramon Vega Jr. and Ethan Hanson return from injuries. Evan Soeffker will be relied on more this year, both on the mound and in the field. The Bulldogs are adding High school senior pitchers Taylor Morrissette and Broc Mutterer as well catcher Luke Carnoy to bolster the depth on the mound and behind the plate. The Bulldogs have plenty of offensive power, hope to improve their defense and compete for the league title.

Cokato 10-12 in 2022 The Kernels have spent the last few years teetering around the 7 seed that automatically qualifies them for Regionals and the 8 seed that leaves them in the League Play in games. They will build the 2023 team around Tom Halonen, Isaac Nelson, Alan Pietila and Riley Gruenhagen. Grayson Londerville, Riley Pennala, Jackson Martin and Jaeger Ohm are being counted on to help the Kernels have a successful 2023. The Kernels greatest need is depth on the mound. Who will eat up innings and keep games close. They may need to play low scoring games unless the offensive production increases dramatically. Defense and team speed should be a strength that could help them win low scoring games. The Cokato goal is to finish in the top 7 and automatically be seeded into the Regionals.

D-C 6-16 in 2022 The Saints bring back 20 Players—Jim Althoff, Jordan Flick, Tyler Brandel, Michael Howell, Dylan Weber, Noah Halonen, Michael Leffler, Collin Krick, Paul Jacobson, Ben Lindquist, Gus Flick, Cy Flick, Steve Boger, James Howell, Josiah Bullivant, Jacob Niemela, Toby Colline, Graham Jacobson, Nikolai Niemela and Jayce Olthoff. The Saint's offense has a lot of veterans and improving younger players so they expect to score a lot. The question of how far they will go will depend on the development of their staff as they look to carve out new roles for their pitchers as they search for the most consistent starters and most effective relievers. The Saints are determined to make the Regionals and hopefully have a chance to play in the State tournament they will be hosting.

Delano 20-2 in 2022 The A's defend their championship with a solid line up on offense and defense and have a deep, reliable pitching staff. Toby Hanson, Trevor Jaunich, Adam Schleper, Jack Paulson, Jake Nelson and Brady Miller highlight the experienced cast of characters returning. The roles of Oran Hinkle, Austin Schneider and Ty Wiemen keep growing each year. Added this season are Nick Foster, Blake Ask and Marcus Riewer. The consensus seems to be that the A's should be the favorite to win the championship again since they return everyone from last year's title team.

2023 State Tournament

The 2023 Minnesota State Tournament will have a new flavor this year. Class A and Class B will be merged into one single elimination tournament featuring 16 Class A teams and 16 Class B teams.

The Class C tournament will remain a single elimination tournament with 48 Class C teams including 4 teams from Region 12 where the North Star League competes.

The hosts for 2023 are the North Star League cities of **Delano, Dassel and Litchfield**. In addition Lion's Field in Waconia will host 8 Class A & B games on the first weekend only.



The NORTH STAR LEAGUE



**Hustle, Hit,
and never quit.**



Howard Lake 13-9 in 2022 Mike Dockendorf and Jared Koch return to anchor a pitching staff that will include the return of veteran Shane Kahn on the mound. Jake Gruenhagen, Mitch Baumann, Sam Kittock Garrett Zander and Matt Streich bring a lot of experience to the line up. College players Brad Bickman, Alex Baumann, Cole Machewski Zach Froman, Connor Donovan and Bennett Anderson will help the Lakers get better as the season goes along. High school players Colton Long, Steven Heber and Mason Macziewski are expected to work their way onto the field and strengthen the team by the end of the year. The Orphans will still be young, but they have always brought good pitching and excellent defense to each contest and expect that they will be competitive all season.



Hutchinson 19-3 in 2022 The Huskies have been near the top of the standings for many years and they retain a lot of veteran players with good experience, strong leadership and proven production. Jake Wendland, Jayden Fleck, Lane Glaser and Zach Kuseske finished in the top ten in batting average in 2022. Marcus Hahn, Cody Arlt, John DeRock, Matt Piechowski and Tyler Shiller are also big contributors. Other parts of the puzzle will be Sam Starke, Ty Glaser and KK Starrett. Sam Rensch is the lone new addition. Hutch has a deep starting staff, a productive run scoring machine and a solid defense. They may need to find deeper more consistent relief pitching, but the Huskies still look to be one of the favorites to finish in the top four if not number one in the league.

Litchfield 16-6 in 2022 The Blues have relied on improved pitching to move up the standings the last couple of years.

This year Avery Liestman and Joey Hyde return as anchors and lefty Hunter Theil has been added. Other returning players are Jake Jones, Andrew Loch, Cody Klabunde, Brady Smith, Kal Volinkaty, Eddie Estrada, Winky Estrada, Drew Kotzer, Jack Ramthun, Carson Deal, Riley Taber, Eric Hulterstrum, Ryan Quast, Ben Alsleben, Bauer Wahl and Bennett Lecher. New additions for 2023 are Connor Taber, Owen Carlson and Caden Bedemer The Blues are still a young team that plans on improvement coming as they gain experience. Pitching remains a strength and could surprise more than a few teams this year as they continue their ascent in the standings.

Loretto 8-14 in 2022 The Larks are returning a large number of strong contributors including batting leader Keenan Hodgkin, plus veterans Tyler Maher, Kent Koch, Nathan Maher, Colton Petron, Ben Leuthner, Josh Gullickson and the Koskies—Cory, Bradley, Joshua and Caleb. Ashton Unzicker and Max Hudlow should contribute more this year and the Larks have added Miles Nablo, Mike Lenzert and Chris Jacobs.. The Larks return most of their staff and made a nice run at the end of last year to become the Regional runner-up at year end. Loretto hopes to build on that run and climb back up the regular season standing to compete for the league title like they have done many times in recent history.

The best thing
about baseball is
there's no homework.



**Sometimes you win,
sometimes you learn.**

Practice like a champion to play like a champion

Happiness is a day at the baseball field.



Yesterday's home runs don't win today's games.



Maple Lake 16-6 in 2022 The Lakers return 15 players who could be regulars in their line up or on the mound. Hunter Malachek, Mitch Wurm, Nick Preisinger, Ben Reilly, Grant Mergan, Luke Fobbe, Riley Decker, Derek Rachel, Donnie Mavenkamp, Matt Bergstrom, Ben Clapp, Jordan Tanner, Ben Goelz, Alex Winslow and Logan Orazem have all had plenty of town team success. Maple Lake also expects contributions from Brady Scanlon, Ryley Hagen, Jake Bergstrom and Carson Cooper. The Lakers depth and experience could go along way toward keeping them in contention for a 2023 title. The biggest concern for the Lakers is which pitchers will be consistent and healthy enough to throw a lot of innings.

Maple Plain 5-15 in 2022 The Diamond Devils are becoming a more mature with catcher TJ Carlson behind the plate and Calvin Ripberger in the outfield. An assortment of pitchers will be taking the hill. Kyle Bode returns, Gunner Goodwin, Mike Frericks, Parker Mullenbach, Lance Reynolds and Colton Peters all will take their turn pitching as well as contributing offensively. Jake Hartman, Nick Hartman, Logan Kinsel, Jackson Erwin, AJ Anhorn and Luke Erickson return with larger roles expected this year. Two Orono High School graduates join this year—Ollie Stevenson and Bradley Walker. If the Diamond Devils can keep their pitchers throwing on a regular basis and avoid injuries, they look to score enough runs to compete with the top half of the league this year. As always how successful the Diamond Devils are on the mound will determine their eventual standing in the league.

Montrose/Waverly 2-20 in 2022 The Stingers have not changed much since last year which means they still are likely to compete for a place near the bottom of the standings. Since they started playing in the league, they have never had a strong, deep pitching staff and that is a problem again this year. They again return Kirby Moynagh, Brady Boddeker, Alex Smothers and Andrew Moynagh to lead the offense. Jacob Noor provides outfield defense and Manny Aamodt infield defense. Added to the roster this year are Jacob Lambrecht, Conor Cote and Keith Bistodeau. The Stingers have traditionally had a lot of players who have fun, show up to compete, but again will have to stop opponents from scoring if they want to reach their goal of escaping last place.

Rockford 4-18 in 2022 For a first year team, the Crows were successful in having fun and winning 4 games to finish 11th and threaten the tenth spot. This year they have Mike Nelson, (SS) Jacob Kraft (P) Ben Bjorn (OF) and Andrew Engebretson (C) back as key returning players. Soren Peterson, Aaron Jansen, Nolan Perry, Aiden Smith and Wilson Sanderson are expected to be big contributors for the Crows this year. The Crows expect their defense to be solid with an obvious need for more pitching depth while working on gaining more town team experience for their young squad. Improving the win total in year 2 and having fun remain the Crows main goals for 2022.

All ball players should quit when it starts to feel as if all the baselines run uphill.



In the great department store of life, baseball is in the toy department.