

Press&Dakotan DAILY DOSE

Sports opinions from the P&D Staff on local and national high school, college and professional sports.



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Over the past two months, I've come to realize how lucky baseball fans are to have instant stats available to them on the Internet. Yes, I'm a child of the computer age, but it still shocks me to how easily accessible certain things are.

One of my "projects" for the summer was to gather and maintain a South Central League (SCL) amateur baseball leaderboard. You may have seen the leaders printed in the paper nearly once a week, but I can tell you, it was far from easy to have those ready. You see, amateur baseball in South Dakota thrives on the fringes of the Internet. Yes, there's a state ama-

Gathering Amateur Baseball Stats No Easy Task

teur association webpage, but it does not have anything resembling stats. And yes, the SCL does a great job providing team rosters and standings on its own site (www.sclbaseball.com), which is run by our friend Aaron Burbach. And there are the occasional teams, like the Freeman Black Sox, who have their own team page with updated individual stats after each game.

So naturally, there was a lot of leg work necessary to get updated stats for all 10 SCL squads. Some managers out there tabulated stats in Excel files and would email those to us, but for the most part, it required us to call managers every week or two and ask for numbers — speaking of which, thanks to all those involved who put up with my weekly phone calls.

But finally, we have updated individual stats for all 10 teams. And it couldn't have come at a better time. The District 6B Tournament starts tonight (Thursday) in Menno.

Ethan Boy Competes At National Rodeo Finals

GALLUP, N.M. — Tate Thompson, a student at Ethan High School, competed with teammates in the Team Roping event at the National Junior High Finals Rodeo (NJHFR) on June 24-30 in Gallup, N.M.



Thompson, who has family (grandparents, aunt, uncle and cousins) in Yankton, qualified for the South Dakota state rodeo earlier this summer.

The NJHFR is the world's largest junior high rodeo, with more than 1,000 entrants from 47 states, Canadian provinces and Australia.

Brandon Valley, Dell Rapids Lead Final Amateur Poll

WATERTOWN — Brandon Valley and the Dell Rapids Mudcats are the top-rated teams in the final South Dakota amateur baseball poll of the 2012 season.

Brandon Valley heads into postseason play as the No. 1-rated team in Class A. The Mud-

cats are No. 1 in Class B. The state amateur tourney is Aug. 1-12 at Mitchell.

Here are the final ratings:
• Class A — 1. Brandon Valley; 2. Renner Monarchs; 3. Yankton; 4. Sioux Falls Saints; 5. Pierre.

• Class B — 1. Dell Rapids Mudcats; 2. Canova; 3. Redfield; 4. Crofton, Neb.; 5. Parkston Mudcats; 6. Harrisburg; 7. Salem; 8. Wynot, Neb.; 9. Madison; 10. (Tie) Dimock-Emery and Clark.

Murphy Announces DWU Men's Hoops Staff

MITCHELL — In his third season as head coach of the Dakota Wesleyan University men's basketball team, Shane Murphy will have a whole new supporting cast surrounding him at practice and on the bench for games starting in the 2012-13 season.

Tim Weidenbach will serve as the Tiger men's assistant coach, Jacob Brandt is DWU's new graduate assistant coach and former men's basketball player German Madueno returns for a third season with the Tigers, this time as a student assistant coach.

Weidenbach is a familiar name to local basketball fans, as he has spent the last 10 seasons as an assistant girls' basketball coach at Parkston High School. In the past five seasons, he has helped guide the Trojans to a 100-15 record and a runner-up finish at the Class A state tournament in 2012. Parkston won 184 games and went to state twice in his 10 seasons with the programs.

TYNDALL WINS TEENER REGION TITLE



The Tyndall 13-14 VFW Teener baseball team won the Region 3A title last weekend in Winner. Team members include: (front, L-R) Schenk, Chelle Mann, Alex Caba, Cole Uecker, Sam Caba, Nick Rokusek, Carter Mechem, (back) coach Gary Kortan, Collin Kortan, Zach Sutera, Cole Hutter Young, Brandon Barnes, Trevor VanWinkle, Asst. Coach Rusty Roland, and assistant coach Kevin Veltek. Not pictured is Austin Kotalik.

SCOREBOARD

Table with GOLF and BASEBALL sections, listing scores for various events and teams.

S.D. GOLF ASSOCIATION (SDGA) JUNIOR TOUR

July 18 at Two Rivers GC, North Sioux City. 12-13 BOYS: Will Greaves, Sioux Falls 74; 14-15 BOYS: Ben Frick, Yankton 92...

SOUTH CENTRAL LEAGUE

These are the final regular season offensive and pitching leaders in the South Central League.

Table listing league leaders for HITS, HOME RUNS, and other stats.

VOLLEYBALL

YANKTON PARKS & REC WOMEN'S SAND LEAGUE RESULTS: Neighborhood Dental def. Larry's Heating & Cooling 2-0 21-8, 21-11; Nitty Cousins def. Subway Girls 2-0 21-18, 21-11; TNT def. Balls Out 2-0 21-19, 21-16; Sets on the Beach def. Skydell def. Fox Youngberg & Lewno 2-1 21-13, 7-21, 21-16...

AREA CALENDAR

Calendar listing various events including BASEBALL, AMATEUR DISTRICT 6B TOUR, SWIMMING, and GOLF.

TRANSACTIONS

BASEBALL COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE—Suspended Chicago CC minor league RHP's Juancho De La Cruz and Antonio Encarnacion 50 games after testing positive for metabolites of Steroids.

AUTO RACING

2012 NASCAR SPRINT CUP SCHEDULE AND STANDINGS. x-number race. Feb. 18 — Budweiser Shootout, Daytona Beach, Fla. (Tony Stewart)...

SCL

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pion Crofton is the No. 1 seed at 16-2, followed by Wynot (12-6) and Tabor.

"I think the top five are pretty solid, but six through nine have shown they can pull off an upset," Kortan said, referencing a 4-3 loss to Lesterville back on June 1. "I would expect one or two (upsets) in districts."

"The wood bat is the ultimate equalizer. I just hope we're not the victim."

Vavruska agreed, saying that beyond Crofton, any number of teams could play for a district title.

"If you look at all the games this year, it's really anybody's to win," Vavruska said. "You'll probably see a few upsets. Crofton really stands out; offensively and defensively they're complete. After that, it's really up in the air."

District Preview

As the city of Menno prepares to host the 10-day, 14-game Dis-

trict 6B Tournament, there has already been a palpable anticipation, according to Mad Frogs manager Ryan Liebl.

"We're anxious for it. That's what's always good about being the host, there's a lot of buzz around town and people come out for all the games," said Liebl, whose team hosts Freeman tonight (Thursday) at 6 p.m. in the tourney opener.

Following tonight's game, the tournament features two games Friday night, three on Saturday and will play out until the July 28 championship game. Five of the nine qualified teams will earn a bid to the state tournament.

Naturally, that will mean good gate revenue for Menno, and an easy destination for the other teams, Liebl said.

"We've got a good setup because Menno is centralized for most of the teams, and parking is never really a concern here," he said.

What does it mean to be a concern for the other eight teams in the tournament is how to upend top-seeded Crofton (16-2).

The defending state Class B champion Bluejays have not exactly slowed down since last summer. Crofton awaits the winner of Freeman and Menno.

"After Crofton, the next four (slots) are pretty wide open," said Wynot manager Terry Foxhoven, whose Expos (12-6) are seeded second.

"Everyone has an equal shot. You just have to play well, because if you don't, you'll be back at home before you know it."

Last year's District 6B champion, Tabor (11-7), opens action this year with Scotland on Friday night at 6 p.m.

You can follow Jeremy Hoeck on Twitter at twitter.com/jhoeck

Hall

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won the NL West that year, beat the Pirates for the pennant and swept the Oakland A's in the World Series, where Larkin hit .353 and scored three runs.

At 6-foot and 185 pounds, Larkin began to develop power the next season, hitting 20 homers. He won the first of three consecutive Gold Glove awards in 1994, took National League MVP honors in 1995 after hitting .319 and leading the Reds to the NL Central title, and in 1996 became the first major league shortstop to post a 30-homer, 30-steal season (33 homers, 36 steals).

"The reason I played was to try to win championships, and we were able to do that," said Larkin, who played his entire 19-year career with the Reds and was an All-Star 12 times.

Larkin also was a role model off the field, winning the Roberto Clemente Award in 1993. It's given annually to a player who demonstrates the values the late Pittsburgh Pirates star displayed in his commitment to community

and understanding the value of helping others.

Larkin, who retired after the 2004 season with a .295 career average, 2,340 hits, 1,329 runs scored and 379 stolen bases, starred during the Steroids Era, which has cast a long shadow over the selection process for the Hall of Fame. Larkin received 51.6 percent of the vote in 2010, his first year on the Hall of Fame ballot, 62.1 percent in 2011, and made the grade this year with 495 votes (86.4%).

"It was a great run. I was really happy how I was able to stay there (in Cincinnati)," Larkin said. "I thought about being good, I thought about being an All-Star, thought about all that kind of stuff, but I never thought about the Hall of Fame."

Santo did, and often. And he wasn't alone. When former Cubs shortstop Ryne Sandberg was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2005, he ended his speech with this: "I know there are a lot of Cub fans here today. I feel like every Cub fan in the world is here with me today. And by the way, for what it's worth, Ron Santo just gained one more vote from the Veterans Committee."

Unfortunately, Santo didn't

live to experience what will be a special day for his family.

Plagued by health problems, Santo died Dec. 3, 2010, at the age of 70. His long battle with diabetes cost him both legs below the knees, but he ultimately died of complications from bladder cancer.

"It was unfortunate that he didn't receive that award while he was living, and he so much warranted it," said former Cubs star Billy Williams, elected to the Hall in 1987. "He won't get the enjoyment (he would have if) he were living and walked up to that podium and received that award."

A member of the Chicago Cubs organization for the better part of five decades as a player (1960-74) and broadcaster (1990-2010), Santo was selected by the Veterans Committee exactly one year after his death.

In 15 major league seasons, Santo compiled a .277 batting average, had 2,254 hits, 1,331 RBIs and 365 doubles in 2,243 games. He also was a tireless fundraiser for juvenile diabetes, raising more than \$50 million.

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