



Babe Ruth finishes third at state

Staples Motley Babe Ruth team last weekend finished third in the State Babe Ruth Tournament in Hawley, winning three games and losing two. Coach Joe Roline turned in the following report.

The state tournament requires teams to play a lot of games in very few days. Because of this, teams are allowed to draft up to three players from within their district. Shawn (Motl) and I debated on whether or not to draft, but decided on taking Riley Johnson and Tyler McCollum, a catcher and pitcher from Park Rapids.

In our first game against DGF, we picked up right where we had left off at the district tournament. Jalen Busker started on the mound throwing two good innings before his arm began to bother him. He was relieved by draftee Tyler McCollum who went on to pitch the rest of the game. Mark Kossan, Devon White, Riley Johnson and McCollum all had two hits. Jalen Busker, Jordan Denning, Seth Auger, Tyler Holub and Brent Stericker all had a hit. Busker, Johnson and McCollum each had doubles. Tyler McCollum received player of the game honors for his performance on the mound and at the plate.

McCollum came back to start our next game against the Albany Huskies. He pitched the first

two innings striking out five of the seven batters he faced before reaching his seven inning limit. Riley Johnson pitched the final five. Going into the seventh inning, the score was five to four in favor of Albany. Albany collected three hits and three walks and added four runs in the seventh inning.

The final score was nine to four. We didn't play our best baseball that game, however, we were still in the game to the very end. Jalen led the way at the plate, going three for five with a double. Riley, Devon, Jordan, Seth, Tyler M, Tyler H and Brent all had a hit.

The boys came back the following day on a mission. I've never seen them that focused. I felt bad for the teams that had to play us that day. Our first game was against Melrose. Tyler M pitched the first two innings and Devon White pitched the last five. Devon led the way at the plate going three for four. Mark had two hits, Tyler M, Jalen, Riley, Jordan, Seth and Joey Amador all had a hit. The only extra base hit was a double by Jalen. The final score was 11-2. Devon White won player of the game honors.

We had a five hour break before we faced Roseau. Jalen, Seth and Mark shared the pitching duties. The Cards pounded out 16

hits and scored 21 runs. Riley Johnson went an impressive six for six and won player of the game honors. Riley is a great player and helped our team tremendously. He caught a total of 27 innings in four days, that's a lot of innings. The win set up a re-match with Albany, Sunday at noon.

Riley pitched the first inning and Tyler M pitched the rest of the game. Tyler is one of the best pitchers I've seen all year. He has excellent control and controls his emotions on the mound very well. He threw 16 innings in the tournament giving up 14 hits, five walks and striking out 17. We played much better than we did in the prior game against Albany, but so did they.

After three innings we were trailing four to zero. Our bats finally woke up in the third inning when Jordan Denning hit a two RBI single to cut the lead in half. Denning in the following inning had a clutch single to tie the game at four.

In the top of the seventh, Albany's lead off hitter got on with a walk and managed to round the bases to put Albany ahead by one. Mark Kossan led off the bottom of the seventh, was bunted over by Tyler M and drove in by none other than Denning. Jordan had a heck of a game. He came through with three clutch hits in tough situa-



Babe Ruth team

The Staples Motley 13 and Under Babe Ruth team competed last week in the Babe Ruth state tournament, finishing in third place after losing twice to Albany. From left, front row, Eric Kossan, Joey Amador, Dakota Waverek, Brent Sterriker, Austin Bendson and Reid Bus-

ker. In the middle, Jalen Busker, Tyler Holub, Devon White and Mark Kossan. In back, Jordan Denning, Tyler McCollum, Kyle Quast, Riley Johnson, Ass't Coach Shawn Motl, Seth Auger, Coach Joe Roline and Garrette Secora.

tions. We had all of the momentum going into extra innings. An umpire cannot win or lose a game, but the field ump managed to blow two very crucial calls in the eighth inning. Even the Albany fans were in shock when the young man called their runner safe and our

guy out. The final score was six to five. It stinks that it had to end that way.

New York Mills went on to beat Albany in the championship. I received compliments from fans, coaches and umpires on how well mannered and respectful our team was. They repre-

sented the Staples Motley community very well. Going from a 6-18 record in the regular season to taking third in the state tournament is quite the turnaround. I'm very proud of the way the boys competed this summer and kept working to improve.



Tennis seniors

Cardinal tennis coach Kevin Coughlin will have a host (seven) seniors playing on this fall's girls tennis team. They will include Abby Edin (front) and (from left) Ashley Lisson, Kelly Hagenson, Annie Gillespie, Skye Coughlin, Savanna

Hill and Caitlin Robinson. Edin, Hagenson and Coughlin are the tri-captains for this season, which is underway now with captain's practices. (Staples World photo by Tom Crawford)

Cardinal girls tennis season set to start August 17

The Staples Motley Cardinal girls tennis team is gearing up for a busy and challenging 2009 schedule with a team that is growing in numbers and strength.

Led by seven seniors: Abby Edin, Skye Coughlin, Ashley Lisson, Caitlin Robinson, Savanna Hill, Kelly Hagenson and Annie Gillespie, the Cards have their eyes on a fifth consecutive state tournament trip and possibly a state championship.

"It's something the veteran players have been talking about and have worked hard for over the years" Coach Kevin Coughlin said. "But winning state or any other match will not define who and what we are as a pro-

gram. Our main expectation is simple in that we want to play our best and have fun doing it. It's about the process, not the end."

Tri-Captains leading the way for the Cards in the absence of 2008 grads Julia Schock, Liz Willgoth, and Hallie Denning will be Abby Edin, Kelly Hagenson, and Skye Coughlin.

"We have a good problem in that there are quite a few strong players on the team who are at varsity level. It will be competitive," Coughlin added.

"We have a lot of veteran experience coming back, but we also have a great deal of young talent" Coughlin added.

Cardinal players include: Juniors: Andrea and Emma Koskiniemi, Katie Stone and Hallie Olsen.

Sophomores: Katie Givans, Tera Weyer, Kelsey Rice, Karlee Haglin, Taylor Bissonette, Abby Willohs,

Stephanie Hernandez, Lacey Blowers, Rebecca Nimitz, Jenna Kohlman and Alicia VanAlst.

Freshman: Annie Kauto, Jasmine McGillivray, Maggie O'Keefe, Brooke Wolhowe, Lindsey Johnson, Megan Duhn and Jenna Pogreba. Also competing for a varsity position from the eighth grade is Mikayla Wing.

Practice officially starts on Monday, August 17, at 7 a.m. The Cards will host a scrimmage on August 19 versus Elk River and Delano beginning at 9 a.m.

The Cards will have a competitive schedule that includes another trip to Madison, Wisc., for tournament play against teams from Illinois, Missouri, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

Two days after the Wisconsin trip, the Cards compete against the top Class A teams at the Pine City tournament.

Hunters will find '09 waterfowl rules fair

Duck and goose hunters have been patiently waiting for final details of the regulations that will govern Minnesota's 2009 waterfowl season. Those details were announced recently and there are some changes that should please Minnesota hunters.

One thing that is not a surprise is the opening date for duck hunting, which will be Saturday Oct. 3. Though the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service framework would allow the season to open a week earlier, Minnesota law prevents it, requiring that the season begin on the Saturday nearest to October 1.

There's some wisdom in this. Minnesota is at the northerly end of U.S. duck rearing territory in the Mississippi Flyway. Ducks generally begin nesting here later than they do in states to the south of us.

Later still are those hens that re-nest after their initial attempt fails, usually due to a predator making a meal of their eggs.

The offspring of a re-nesting hen generally mature later, which delays "mom's" molting of flight feathers. Consequently, these hens will regain their flight feathers later. Some may not be fully flight-ready when the season opens and may be more vulnerable when the marshes are full of hunters.

The counter-argument is that some early migrating ducks, like blue-winged teal, often leave us very early in the hunting season. By early October they're ready to migrate and it doesn't take a lot of hunting pressure to move them out of the state. If the season started earlier, so the argument goes, Minnesota hunters might get a crack at more of them. But the point is moot, because without a law change it can't happen.

The 2009 general waterfowl season will last 60 days, from October 3 to December 1 and the daily bag limit will be six ducks, with by-species limits within the total daily bag. Speaking of which, Minnesota duck hunters will be pleased that last year's very tight daily bag limit on bluebills has

been relaxed. In 2008, the USFWS allowed two bluebills per day for only 20 of the 60 days and one bluebill in the daily bag for the remaining 40 days. This year the daily bluebill limit will be two for the entire 60-day season.

Within the Minnesota duck hunting fraternity there is a subgroup that specializes in hunting diving ducks, typically during the middle to late part of the season. These folks commonly hunt on larger lakes, often with far more decoys than used by the average hunter. Larger boats capable of handling big water are often used. It's a more labor-intensive effort and typically practiced under more extreme weather conditions.

Bluebills have historically made up the bulk of these late season flights and late season hunter harvest. On larger lakes where diving ducks rest and feed, hunters commonly encounter mixed flocks, which may include bluebills, ringnecks ("ring-bills") and sometimes redheads. The only one of these three species without a special limit is ringnecks, making in-flight duck identification skills important. That was especially true in 2008, with a one-bird daily bluebill limit.

Though bluebill numbers have declined significantly in recent years, they increased somewhat this year and remain more numerous than most North American ducks. Just as significant, their decline has been attributed to habitat factors, not hunting pressure.

On to other species. Minnesota DNR waterfowl managers again turned down the opportunity to offer hunters a three-per-day limit on wood ducks. The USFWS made this an option for all 14 states in the Mississippi Flyway last year and this year. All except Minnesota, took it in 2008 and the rest are expected to do the same this year.

Wood ducks generally rank among the top five in Minnesota for total harvest each year, most of these coming in the early part of the season. There was quite a bit of speculation that the DNR might allow Minnesota hunters the three-wood duck option this year, in part to boost what has been generally spotty hunter success in recent years.

But DNR countered by saying that it has polled Minnesota hunters and most preferred a conservative harvest approach, even if other states in our

flyway "take the money and run." When you think about it, an outing on the marsh that ends with a bag of two wood ducks should be considered a success. One more wood duck, while nice, shouldn't make all the difference.

Other limitations within the Minnesota six bird 2009 daily bag include four mallards (only one hen), two redheads, one pintail, one canvasback and one black duck. Canvasbacks were off-limits entirely in Minnesota last year and have been an on-the-bubble duck for a long, long time. Though population estimates are up somewhat in 2009, their numbers have been consistently low enough to justify very limited harvest, up to and including, annual closures.

Canvasbacks are considered one of the very best of ducks on the table. Unfortunately, conflict between their nesting requirements and land use practices has reduced their breeding potential and made them as much prized for their comparative scarcity as for their table qualities.

Goose hunting has really been the one true bright spot in Minnesota waterfowl hunting in recent years. This year, the daily Canada goose limit during the 60-day regular season

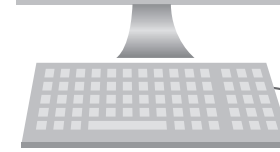
from Oct. 3, to Dec. 1, is two. The Minnesota DNR was unsuccessful in obtaining permission from the Mississippi Flyway Council to boost the limit to three Canada geese over most of the state. However, the limit during the early September and late December seasons, intended to thin the population of Minnesota resident geese, is five.

If you measure the quality of Minnesota duck hunting strictly by birds seen and birds harvested, then we've fallen on difficult times in recent years. But, fortunately, there are a goodly number of optimistic souls who keep the tradition alive, while waiting and working for better days.

Inside the Outdoors



Mike Rahn



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