

# The 2019 Spectator

2019 Preview Issue



## Manager's Predicted Finish

### Predictions

For 2019 the North Star League managers are predicting the standings will look a lot like the 2018 standings. Maple Lake and Hutchinson are picked to compete by most to compete for the championship. Delano is expected to be healthier and are picked third. Buffalo and Loretto are the selections for fourth and fifth with D-C slotted for the sixth slot. Howard Lake who needed to win a tie breaker to avoid being in the bottom four is predicted for seventh place and Maple Plain who lost that tie breaker is picked for eighth. The next three teams are picked to also make the top seven and receive a bye into the Regionals. That leaves the three teams who finished as the bottom three last year and the managers are predicting the same finish with Cokato ninth, Litchfield tenth and Montrose/Waverly to be eleventh.

Maple Lake has a history of good pitching, a strong line-up and winning which along with the motivation of playing in the State tournament as a hosting team make them a favorite choice to win again. Hutch won in 2017 and won the Regional tourney in 2018. Since most of their team returns and some younger players have gained experience, they are a natural choice to be in contention. Delano suffered injuries to their pitching staff and if their pitchers return healthy, the A's are expected to move back up and contend. Buffalo has been improving each year for the last few years and their talent translate to being the pick for fourth place. Loretto continues to develop young players and add talent to a good veteran core and has consistently been in contention for the top spots in the league. The sixth place slot goes to D-C who has been streaky the last couple of years, but manage to make the Regions each year. Howard Lake had an uncharacteristic drop in the standings last year and barely made the top seven. The Orphans continue to be a team in transition as they have lost some top players and long time Manager, Mike Gagnon has stepped down. Will they regain their traditional winning ways or slip a little?

## 2018 Final Standings

	W	L	Pct	GB
Maple Lake	17	3	.850	...
Hutchinson	14	6	.700	3
Buffalo	14	6	.700	3
Loretto	13	7	.650	5
Delano	10	10	.500	7
D-C	10	10	.500	7
Howard Lake	9	11	.450	8
Maple Plain	9	11	.450	8
Cokato	7	13	.350	10
Litchfield	4	16	.200	13
Waverly	3	17	.150	15

Maple Plain was so close to escaping the bottom four and being in the Regions, so they will need improvement from their young core and need their pitchers to stay healthy if they want to move up this year. Cokato, Litchfield and Montrose/Waverly have been in the bottom four recently and until they prove they can win more games, they will continue to be picked for the ninth, tenth and eleventh spots.

The best guess is that all teams will be competitive, last year's bottom teams will improve, the top teams may not be as strong as in the past and the teams will be tightly bunched. As usual we can expect some team will surprise everyone by winning more games than predicted and another team will suffer a few more losses than we thought they would.

EAT.  
SLEEP.  
BASEBALL.  
REPEAT.

## The NORTH STAR LEAGUE



*Show me a guy who's afraid to look bad,  
and I'll show you a guy you can beat every time.*

**Buffalo 14-6 in 2018** The Bulldogs line up includes as many dangerous hitters as any in the league. Returning are Jake Duske, JD O'Donnell, Colton Haight and Jason Senger. Also counted on this year will be Jon Weber, Cal James, Ramon Vega Jr and Christian Johnson. The Bulldogs also bring back Jon Eurlle and Carter Vogt to top their pitching staff. Being strong throughout the order and having many pitching options, their goal is to develop a stronger defense and some catching depth. With a veteran core and capable younger players, there is no reason that Buffalo shouldn't be in the mix for the top spots in the standings.

**Cokato 7-13 in 2018** The Kernels return a group of experienced players and have not lost any regulars from last year and they will rely on that experience to take them up in the standings and onto State. The core includes Isaac and Luke Nelson, Dalton Asplin, Billy Aho, Tanner Terning, Steve Schmitt and Vinnie & Eric Pokornowski. Cokato pitchers throw strikes and keep them in most games. If they can improve their run scoring and score consistently, they may be ready to make that move they are looking for.

**D-C 10-10 in 2018** 2019 brings a lot of optimism to the Saints. Jordan Flick and Tyler Zweibhomer return once more to anchor the staff and many veterans remain in the line up including John Hohenstein, Brendon Opsahl, Andy Haataja, Bryce Berggren, Trent Thinesen and Tyler Brandel. Also returning after a couple of years away is Lucas Larson and much more is expected from Ben Lindquist, Alex Terning, Colin Krick, Cy Flick, Gus Flick and James Howell. D-C expects their pitching staff to keep them in most games and contribute to a winning season. They look for improvement in their batting average and on base percentage so they can utilize their team speed to produce more runs to help out those pitchers. The Saints are always a competitive team with a chance to go a long way.

**Delano 10-10 in 2018** 2018 would have been a lot better for the A's if their pitching staff had stayed healthy. For 2019, they will look for Matt Arens, Jordan Schramel and Jeremy Maschino to be strong on the mound. Their line up is made up of many good veterans and experienced younger players like Jeff and Joe Althoff, Ryan Hayes, Adam Schleper, Brady Miller, Hunter Hart, Toby Hanson, Hans Alwin, Marcus Wittmer, James Otto, Nate Norman, Cade Lommel and Jack Paulson. Delano plays good defense, has plenty of speed, can hit and has been to State three of the last four years. If they keep their pitchers healthy in 2019, the A's expect to have a good chance to go back to State.



**You wouldn't have won  
if we'd beaten you.  
Yogi Berra**



## The NORTH STAR LEAGUE

*If my uniform doesn't get dirty, I haven't done anything in the baseball game. Rickey Henderson*

Hitting is fifty percent  
above the shoulders Ted Williams



**Howard Lake 9-11 in 2018** The Orphans formula for success always seems to include top flight pitching backed up by a strong, solid defense. Mike Dockendorf and Jared Koch are back again and expect to log a lot of innings. Also returning are Steve Boger, Matt Donovan, Mitch and Alex Bauman, Matt Streich, Zach Kuefler, Brad Bickmann, and Cory Dehn. The Orphans expect Jake Gruenhagen back and possibly some appearances from Riley, but will go into 2019 without Ben Borell, Brett Ahsenmacher and most notably the retirement and loss of experienced leadership of Manager Mike Gagnon. New manager Mike Dockendorf will have a challenge continuing the great tradition of Orphan baseball, but their pitching, defense and experienced gained by their younger players over the last two years gives them confidence that they will remain competitive and battle for the top spots in league standings.

**Hutchinson 14-6 in 2018** The Huskies have finished first and second the last two years and look to be strong again. Hutch returns Jake Wendland, Matt Piechowski, Eva Kohli, Jacob Kraft, Jayden Fleck, Jeremiah VanDeSteege, Cody Arlt and Keegan Macemon. The retirement of Matt Timm along with non-returnees Jayden Juergensen, Mike Kobow, Kevin Kuhl, Dylan Reid and Brad Hemling could hurt some, but the Huskies have Marcus Hahn returning, expect more from Noah Corrow and have added Tyler Schiller, Lane Glaser and Mitchell Reiner. The Huskies expect their offense to produce lots of runs and their defense to keep them competitive. Starting pitching may not be as deep as recent years, but everyone expects that Hutch will still be in the battle for the championship and the State tourney.

**Litchfield 4-16 in 2018** The Blues goal is to improve and make it out of the bottom four and into Regions. Key returnees are Matt Spreader, Jake Jones, Luke Schultz, Toby Chellin, Brady Smith and Joey Hyde. In addition, Andrew Lock, Kal Volinsky and Dylan Kotzer are expected to contribute more. New players for 2019 are Afton & Ezra Kaping and Jon Kiehn. Litchfield's strength is defense and the hitting from the top and middle of their line-up. To get more wins, the Blues' will need to find and establish consistent starters for their pitching staff.

**Loretto 13-7 in 2018** Again this year, the Larks will have a strong group of veterans returning. Tyler Maher, Kent Koch, Nathan Maher, Eric Schutte, Colton Petron, Will Wade and Drew VanDehey represent a powerful line up. Younger players Hunter Petron, Will Reschenberg, Tyler Gearin, Andrew Rossini, Noah Schneider, Donny Schroeder and Tommy Wehman add depth to the experienced core group. Loretto should score runs, but and probably need young pitchers to provide solid efforts for Loretto to stay at or near the top in 2019.



My motto was always to keep swinging.  
Whether I was in a slump or feeling badly  
or having trouble off the field,  
the only thing to do was keep swinging.  
Hank Aaron



THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT THINGS IN LIFE ARE GOOD FRIENDS AND A STRONG BULLPEN.

**Maple Lake 17-3 in 2018** Over the years the Lakers have relied on having the best starting pitching in the league and the top line-up top to bottom to win a lot of games and win or compete for the championship. Back for 2019 are Matt Bergstrom, Mitch Wurm, Riley Decker, Luke Fobbe, Brian Redemske and Derek Rachel. In addition, McRae Haney and Nate Maas are expected to have good years. New to the Lakes this year are outfielder Ben Goelz and Catcher Ben Clapp. Maple Lake hosts the State Tourney this year and expects to use that as motivation to make a deep tourney run.

**Maple Plain 9-11 in 2018** The Diamond Devils developed a younger group of players last year as TJ Carlson, Tommy Traen, Danny Fafinski, Jake Hartman, Logan Kinsel, Calvin Rippberger, Anthony Tavella, Kevin Kvern and Max Marshall gained a lot of experience. With KC Johnson and Billy Soule back as seasoned veterans, Maple Plain should be able to run a competitive lineup out there every game. They could use a power hitter and they need their pitching staff to be healthy. Judson McKown and Max Marshall should throw the most innings and the Devils will need some good innings from Colton Peters, Parker Schlueter, Hartman and Soule to move up in the standings. Maple Plain will need their younger players to come through in tight games to be successful.

**Montrose/Waverly 3-17 in 2018** The Stingers are slowly improving each year in the win column. Returning again are Kirby Moynagh, Brady Boddeker, Ben Kunze, Bill Aamodt, Alex Smothers and Trevin Olund. Other contributors will be Eddie Kolasa, Nick Zellmer, Andrew Moynagh, J.T. Weiman, Travis Bickman and Cole Hanson. They are confident their hitting and defense will continue to improve and keep them competitive. Pitching could be the Stingers Achilles' heel as they don't have much depth and will need someone to step up and provide consistent innings to continue their improvement.



MOST GAMES ARE LOST, NOT WON. CASEY STENDEL

**Again in 2019, the league will be 11 teams strong.**

The result is every team in the North Star League will play a home and away series with the other 10 teams for a 20 game regular season schedule. The top seven teams in the league standings will receive a bye into the regions. The bottom four teams will play a league play off with the winner becoming the eighth seed at the Region 12 tournament.



I have baseball in my blood,  
baseball is all I've ever wanted to do.

