



NORTH DIVISION

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Alexandria Beetles (pages 53-70) Founded in 2001, the Beetles are located in the smallest city in the NWL with Alexandria's population at 11,481. The Beetles lone playoff appearance came in 2003 following a second place overall finish to St. Cloud in the North Division standings, thus the team is looking for its first division championship. The Beetle nickname is a takeoff of an "Alexandria Rock Stars" name the team entry. Former Beetles Jeremy Accardo (Blue Jays), Josh Newman (Royals), Carlos Muniz (Mets), and Nick Hundley (Padres) were all in the big leagues in 2008.

Brainerd Lakes Area Lunkers (pages 71-86) Founded in 2009, the Lunkers are the newest team in the NWL. The Lunkers took the place of the Brainerd Blue Thunder who folded after four seasons (2005-08). Prior to them the Brainerd Mighty Gulls were an NWL franchise for five seasons from 1998-02. In all, Brainerd teams have made four playoff appearances and reached the championship series in their most recent visit in 2002. Brainerd and its sister city Baxter total 21,717 residents. A "lunker" is a very large fish. TJ Bohn (Phillies) was the only former Brainerd player in the big leagues in 2008, but three others have advanced to the show.

Duluth Huskies (pages 87-102) Beginning play in 2003, the Huskies have had some success on the field but their first championship eludes them. Duluth has reached the postseason in three of their six seasons, most recently in 2007, with their lone championship appearance coming with a loss to Madison in 2004. Duluth with 85,439 people is the fourth largest city in Minnesota. Prior to the Huskies joining the Northwoods League, Wade Stadium was home to the independent Northern League's Duluth-Superior Dukes. Former Huskies pitchers Joe Bisenius (Phillies) and Doug Mathis (Rangers) both spent time on big league rosters in 2008.

Mankato MoonDogs (pages 103-118) Mankato became a Northwoods League affiliate as the Mashers in 1999 before eventually becoming the MoonDogs in 2002. Alas, in 2008, Mankato made its first postseason appearance in its tenth season following the team winning the first half championship in the North. Mankato, at 36,240, is one of the smaller cities in the NWL. Former Mashers Curtis Granderson (Tigers), Jack Hannahan (Athletics), and Paul McNulty (Padres) all were in the majors in 2008.

Rochester Honkers (pages 119-138) Rochester is one of two NWL franchises that have been in the league since day one in 1994. Although the league has grown and changed around Rochester throughout the years, the Honkers continue to be the winningest team in league history in total wins (546), winning percentage (.583), and NWL Championships (4). Their most recent title and postseason appearance came in 2006 when the franchise's 50-17 regular season mark was the best the league has ever seen. Rochester is Minnesota's third largest city at 100,845 and is home to the world-famous Mayo Clinic. Of the three Honkers to advance to the big leagues, Andre Ethier (Dodgers) was the only one in the majors in '08.

St. Cloud River Bats (pages 139-156) St. Cloud joined the NWL in 1997 and is the only team to have switched ballparks during their tenure in the league. After playing 10 seasons at Dick Putz Field, the River Bats moved across a parking lot to a renovated Joe Faber Field in 2007. The River Bats own the second most championships in Northwoods League history with three, most recently taking the title in 2007. St. Cloud's city population is 65,246 but neighboring cities of Sartell, Sauk Rapids, St. Augusta, and Waite Park push the St. Cloud metro area's total over 100,000. Seven former River Bats have advanced to the big leagues with Robb Quinlan (Angels), Tom Gorzelanny (Pirates), Sean Kazmar (Padres), and Casey McGehee (Cubs) all appearing in 2008.

Thunder Bay Border Cats (pages 157-172) Founded in 2003, the Border Cats have quickly become the most recent on-field success story in the Northwoods League. The team has advanced to the league championship series in three of the last four years, having won the title in 2005 and 2008. The Border Cats entered the NWL shortly after the Thunder Bay Whiskey Jacks became defunct in the independent Northern League. Thunder Bay (population 109,140) is a relatively new city with the twin cities of Fort William and Port Arthur becoming one in 1970. Thunder Bay is the oldest existing Northwoods League franchise yet to have a player advance to the major leagues.

