





Schedule & Info



May/June

				28 STC 7:05	29 STC 7:05	30 MAD 7:05
31 MAD 1:05	1 MAN 7:05	2 MAN 7:05	3 EC 6:35	4 EC 6:35	5 BC 6:05	6 BC 6:05
7 OFF	8 ALX 6:05	9 ALX 7:05	10 WIS 7:05	11 WIS 7:05	12 STC 7:05	13 STC 7:05
14 TB 6:05	15 TB 6:05	16 DUL 7:05	17 DUL 7:05	18 ALX 6:05	19 ALX 7:05	20 ROC 7:05
21 ROC 3:05	22 OFF	23 TB 6:05	24 TB 6:05	25 GB 6:35	26 GB 7:05	27 MAD 5:05
28 MAD 3:05	29 ROC 7:05	30 ROC 7:05	All games are Central Daylight Time			

July

			1 MAN 7:05	2 MAN 7:05	3 TB 7:05	4 TB 12:05
5 OFF	6 EC 7:05	7 EC 7:05	8 ALX 6:05	9 ALX 6:05	10 GB 7:05	11 GB 7:05
12 DUL 1:05	13 BRD 7:05	14 ROC 7:05	15 ROC 7:05	16 DUL 7:05	17 DUL 7:05	18 MAN 7:05
19 MAN 6:05	20 OFF	21 *ALL STAR	22 OFF	23 STC 7:05	24 STC 7:05	25 MAN 7:05
26 MAN 1:05	27 WIS 6:35	28 WIS 6:35	29 BC 7:05	30 BC 7:05	31 ROC 7:05	

August

						1 ROC 7:05
2 OFF	3 DUL 7:05	4 DUL 7:05	5 STC 7:05	6 STC 7:05	7 ALX 7:05	8 ALX 7:05
9 TB 6:05	10 TB 6:05	11	12	13	14	15
16	Division Playoff Aug. 11-13 Championship Series Aug. 14-16					

Home games shaded

*All-Star game in Thunder Bay, Canada

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 431
Brainerd, MN 56401

Business phone:

(218) 824-FISH (3474)

Business fax:

(320) 255-5228

Team Email:

info@lunkersbaseball.com

Official website:

www.lunkersbaseball.com

Broadcast Information:

www.lunkersbaseball.com

Radio Station:

TBA

Front office personnel:

Joel Sutherland President
Ryan Voz Vice President
Marc Jerzak Vice President

Field staff:

Ryan Levendoski Field Manager

Game day staff:

TBA

Media:

Mike Bialka Brainerd Daily Dispatch
Colin MacDonald BL Broadcasting
Lon Schmidt WWWI
David Pundt KLKS
Dave Slater Lakeland Public TV

alexandria
beetles

BRainerd
LUNKERS

duluth
huskies

markato
moundjays

rochester
hornets

st.cloud
river bats

thunder bay
border cats





Joel Sutherland
President

Joel purchased the Lunkers in 2008. He also continues to own the St. Cloud River Bats and has since 1997. His education, which includes an undergraduate degree at St. Cloud State University, a graduate degree at Ohio University, and an internship with the Los Angeles Dodgers minor league office in Vero Beach, FL has given him an appreciation for sports. Joel's experiences which include a career with the Minnesota Twins, the Minnesota North Stars, and opening his own sports marketing agency have been instrumental in the success of the River Bats organization. Originally from Silver Bay, MN, Joel and his wife Pam have been married for 26 years. They have three children, Kellie, Nick and Robby.

Ryan enters his 11th season in the Northwoods League and his first involved with the Brainerd franchise. He is also currently in his third season as Vice President for the St. Cloud River Bats. Ryan was the General Manager for the Alexandria Beetles from 2001 to 2006 where he earned the Northwoods League Executive of the Year honors after the 2002 season. Before Alexandria, Ryan was the Assistant General Manager for the River Bats in 1998 and 1999 and the Director of Marketing for the United Way of Central Minnesota in 2000. Ryan, originally from Cold Spring, MN, graduated from St. Cloud State with a degree in Mass Communications and lives in Avon with his wife Melissa and their two children Noah and Eva.



Ryan Voz
Vice President



Marc Jerzak
Vice President

Marc enters his ninth year in the Northwoods League and his first with the Lunkers. He's also in his third year as the Vice President for the St. Cloud River Bats. After earning a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Business Management at St. John's University, Marc began his Northwoods League career with an internship in the inaugural season for the Alexandria Beetles. The internship quickly led to the Assistant General Manager position with the River Bats that he held for three years, before being promoted to General Manager during the 2005 and 2006 seasons. In 2007, Marc was voted the Northwoods League Executive of the Year. Originally from Milaca, MN, Marc and his wife Janet currently reside in St. Augusta.

Ryan is entering his third season in the Northwoods League and his first with Brainerd Lakes Area Lunkers. Levandoski was an assistant coach with the Mankato Moondogs franchise and led the organization into the Northwoods League playoffs. His past coaching experience also includes seven years as the Head Coach of the Genoa-De Soto-Stoddard American Legion Program. In 2002, The Stoddard native guided the Legion team to a Class A State Championship and a 3rd place finish in the Division II Midwest National Tournament. Levandoski also served as the Lead Baseball Assistant at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville for the 2005 season, where he was responsible for hitting and defense. In the spring of 2007, he served as an assistant for both Viterbo University and La Crosse Aquinas. Both teams had unparalleled success with Viterbo University setting a school record for wins (32) and Aquinas winning the Division III State Championship. Last summer Ryan was also an assistant coach with the Thunder Bay Border Cats in 2006. He has a Bachelor of Art in Social Sciences from the University of Wisconsin-Platteville. He received his Masters in Sport Administration from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse in the spring of 2007.



Ryan Levandoski
Field Manager

alexandria
beetles

BRAINERD
LUNKERS

deluth
hustles

mankato
moondogs

rochester
honkers

st. cloud
river bats

thunder bay
border cats





All-Stars

Mid-Season All-Star

alexandria
beetles

BRAINERD
LUNKERS

duluth
huskies

mankato
moondogs

rochester
honkers

st.cloud
river bats

thunder bay
border cats



Alex Kalogrides (San Francisco)



Michael
Gedman
(Massachusetts)



Greg Garcia (Hawaii)



Alex Kalogrides (San Francisco)

Photos by Ricky Bassman



River Bats Owner Takes Over Brainerd

By: Curt Carstensen, 12/22/08



The Northwoods League announced today that St. Cloud River Bats Owner Joel Sutherland has purchased the Brainerd Blue Thunder and has taken over operations of the team beginning immediately. The Northwoods League had owned the franchise since early September.

Sutherland has owned the St. Cloud River Bats since the team's inception into the Northwoods League in 1997. He also started the Alexandria Beetles as owner in 2001. Both of those franchises continue their longstanding success in central Minnesota. The River Bats have won three Northwoods League championships in 12 seasons and have averaged better than 1,850 fans per game since 2000. Alexandria, a city of roughly 10,000 people, has averaged better than 1,000 fans per game in their 8-year history.

Assisting Sutherland in turning the Brainerd franchise into a thriving Northwoods League affiliate will be the management staff that works with him in St. Cloud. River Bats Vice Presidents Ryan Voz and Marc Jerzak will share duties operating both the River Bats and the Brainerd-Baxter affiliate. Voz has been involved with the NWL since starting as the Assistant General Manager in St. Cloud in 1998-99. He rejoined the River Bats in 2007 after a six-year run as General Manager of the Alexandria Beetles. Voz joined Sutherland in starting that franchise in 2001 and carried it for the next five years into its current day successful state. Jerzak began his Northwoods League career with in internship in Alexandria during that 2001 season. He joined the River Bats full-time staff in 2002 before taking over as the team's General Manager in 2005. Both men have once been named the Northwoods League Executive of the Year; Voz earned the award in 2003 and Jerzak earned it in 2007.

Team management decided to change the team name and start fresh in 2009. A name-the-team contest was held to determine the new nickname.



On August 6, 2008 a total of 1,875 fans packed Mills Field in Brainerd for a Blue Thunder game against St. Cloud

alexandria
beetles

BRainerd
LODKERS

duluth
huskies

marsh
moon dogs

rochester
hankers

st. cloud
river bats

thunder bay
border cats





Head to Head Records

alexandria
beetles

**BRAINERD
LUNKERS**

duluth
huskies

mankato
moondogs

rochester
honkers

st.cloud
river bats

thunder bay
border cats

Year	Record	ALX	AUS	DUL	EAU	GFK	KEN	LAC	MAD	MNK	MIN	ROC	STC	THU	WAT	WIS	BC	GB
1998	21-43		5-3			7-5	1-7					2-6	2-8		1-7	3-7		
1999	35-28		5-3			8-3				2-6		5-3	3-7		5-3	7-3		
2000	28-32					3-4				6-2	6-4	1-7	3-9		3-5	6-1		
2001	25-37	5-5							5-3			4-4	4-6		4-4	3-5		
2002	39-25	9-3							5-3	3-7		5-3	6-4		6-2	3-5		
2005	29-38	4-8		1-7	2-2			2-1	1-3	2-6		1-3	4-4	5-3	3-1	4-0		
2006	27-41	5-7		2-6	0-4			3-1	0-4	1-7		1-3	5-3	6-2	2-2	2-2		
2007	26-41	0-8		1-7	X			2-2	X	3-5		4-4	3-4	4-4	2-2	3-1	2-2	2-2
2008	23-43	1-7		5-3	1-3			1-3	0-4	3-5		4-4	3-5	2-6	1-1	2-2	X	X
Totals	253-328	24-38	10-6	9-23	3-9	18-12	1-7	8-7	11-17	22-46	6-4	27-37	33-50	17-15	27-27	33-26	2-2	2-2

ALX-Alexandria Beetles, AUS-Austin Southern Minny Stars, BC-Battle Creek Bombers, DUL-Duluth Huskies, EAU-Eau Claire Express, GFK-Grand Forks Channel Cats, GB-Green Bay Bullfrogs, KEN-Kenosha Kroakers, LAC-La Crosse Loggers, MAD-Madison Mallards, MNK-Mankato Mashers (MoonDogs 2002), MIN-Minot Greenheads, ROC-Rochester Honkers, STC-St. Cloud River Bats, THU-Thunder Bay Border Cats, WAT-Waterloo Bucks, WIS-Wisconsin Woodchucks.



Miscellaneous Records



	Home Record			Road Record			Extra Inning Record			One Run Record			Shutout Record		
	W	L	PCT	W	L	PCT	W	L	PCT	W	L	PCT	W	L	PCT
1998	12	20	.375	9	23	.281	4	1	.800	7	10	.412	1	6	.143
1999	16	15	.516	19	13	.594	6	2	.750	7	7	.500	3	1	.750
2000	14	16	.467	14	16	.467	3	1	.750	6	3	.667	2	1	.667
2001	15	15	.500	10	22	.313	4	5	.444	12	10	.545	4	7	.364
2002	21	11	.656	18	14	.563	4	3	.571	12	11	.522	5	2	.714
2005	15	18	.455	14	20	.412	0	6	.000	8	9	.471	8	4	.667
2006	18	16	.529	9	25	.265	1	1	.500	6	9	.400	4	8	.333
2007	19	14	.576	7	27	.206	2	4	.333	6	15	.286	3	3	.500
2008	14	20	.412	9	23	.281	4	3	.571	11	8	.579	3	5	.375
Totals	144	145	.498	109	183	.373	28	26	.519	75	82	.478	33	37	.471

alexandra
beetles

**BRANDON
LUNKERS**

dolph
hushies

markato
moondogs

nchester
honkers

st.cloud
river bats

thunder bay
border cats





2008 Final Blue Thunder Statistics

W-L Record: 23-43

PLAYER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB	CS	SLG	OBP	E	
Caster, Mitch,OF	.287	47	167	17	48	10	0	1	22	20	31	2	5	.365	.381	8	
DeBiasse, Nick,1B	.196	32	97	17	19	3	2	1	15	17	36	1	0	.299	.325	13	
Enriquez, Noble,2B	.178	14	45	4	8	0	0	0	1	5	5	1	1	.178	.275	4	
*Garcia, Greg,2B	.326	43	141	29	46	8	1	1	21	29	19	3	4	.418	.448	12	
*Gedman, Michael,1B	.235	47	119	13	28	6	2	1	15	10	21	2	0	.345	.295	5	
Harshman, Codi,OF	.209	31	91	13	19	0	0	0	5	7	19	4	2	.209	.267	1	
Jelacie, Nick,OF	.250	4	12	2	3	1	0	0	2	1	7	1	0	.333	.286	0	
Krebs, Paul,2B	.364	6	11	3	4	1	0	0	0	2	4	1	0	.455	.533	2	
Landi, Troy,OF	.182	38	121	16	22	4	0	0	8	21	31	7	1	.215	.313	3	
Lincoln, Joe,C	.125	4	8	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	.125	.364	0	
*Lockwood, Jeff,DH	.290	33	100	10	29	5	0	0	15	7	15	0	0	.340	.345	2	
Lucas, Trey,C	.220	43	141	22	31	6	0	4	21	17	43	1	0	.348	.337	5	
Matthews, John,3B	.333	8	15	0	5	1	0	0	2	0	4	0	0	.400	.333	4	
*McDonald, Jared,SS	.276	50	185	21	51	8	1	3	26	26	32	8	1	.378	.369	15	
McGuire, Michael,OF	.000	12	20	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	0	0	.000	.130	1	
Pettersen, Adam,SS	.303	65	228	29	69	4	0	0	25	30	41	15	4	.320	.413	23	
Ramirez, Devon,OF	.175	48	97	21	17	4	0	0	12	31	33	2	2	.216	.403	4	
Restko, Curtis,OF	.272	55	169	23	46	8	0	0	15	27	17	2	0	.320	.392	0	
Schmidt, Jonathan,3B	.098	20	51	5	5	0	0	0	4	4	17	0	0	.098	.179	6	
#Sisney, Kyle,3B	.202	36	109	14	22	3	0	0	12	9	22	0	0	.229	.304	11	
Tabor, Jomar,OF	.091	10	22	2	2	1	0	0	1	6	8	0	1	.136	.310	0	
Winslow, Tim,C	.200	38	115	12	23	6	0	0	13	10	17	1	0	.252	.290	11	
All Others	.125		24	2	3	2	0	0	5	5	10	0	0	.208	.267	6	
Total-All Batters	.240		2088		501		6		240		438		21		.350		136
				277		81		11		289		51		.300			

PITCHER	W-L	ERA	G	GS	CG	SHO	SV	IP	H	R	ER	HR	HB	BB	SO	WP	AVG
DeGagne, Matt	1-3	7.45	15	2	0	0	1	29.0	41	31	24	2	3	23	23	0	.328
Foley, Scott	1-2	5.27	12	7	0	0	1	41.0	54	34	24	0	1	25	19	4	.338
*Gedman, Michael	5-2	5.32	19	0	0	0	0	47.1	42	38	28	3	8	32	33	0	.226
Geiger, Casey	1-4	7.22	7	4	0	0	0	28.2	39	31	23	1	2	16	19	5	.307
Gottwalt, Matt	0-0	6.75	1	0	0	0	0	1.1	2	1	1	0	0	0	3	0	.286
Hoffman, Kevin	0-1	6.43	1	1	0	0	0	7.0	9	5	5	0	1	2	3	1	.300
Jensen, Kori	0-0	0.00	2	0	0	0	0	3.2	2	2	0	0	0	6	2	3	.154
Jiggitts, Kris	3-7	5.00	12	10	1	0	0	68.1	89	50	38	1	4	24	52	8	.318
Kalogrides, Alex	4-3	2.69	11	10	1	1	0	63.2	60	29	19	3	3	19	34	2	.243
Kohls, Adam	2-3	2.81	7	6	0	0	0	41.2	38	18	13	0	3	16	23	5	.238
Kramer, Brett	1-0	6.75	4	0	0	0	1	6.2	10	7	5	0	0	6	4	1	.357
*Lockwood, Jeff	0-3	4.97	7	6	0	0	0	38.0	42	23	21	3	4	24	27	1	.292
Lueck, Michael	3-7	4.50	14	11	2	1	0	72.0	75	44	36	5	5	25	45	4	.263
Moore, Cole	0-0	10.80	2	2	0	0	0	5.0	10	9	6	0	1	7	3	2	.455
*Parish, Spencer	1-1	8.76	15	0	0	0	0	24.2	22	31	24	2	3	30	24	11	.239
Ramirez, Devon	0-2	5.92	13	4	0	0	1	24.1	30	23	16	3	0	24	14	2	.297
Stringfield, Darryl	0-4	4.54	21	3	0	0	2	35.2	38	28	18	0	1	34	31	6	.275
All Others	1-1	9.82	15	0	0	0	2	22.0	35	25	24	2	3	13	16	2	.361
Total-All Pitchers	23-43	5.22		66		3		560.0	638	429	325	25	42	326	375		.285
				4		8											

* Bats Left for Batters, Throws Left for Pitchers

Switch-Hitter

A.J. Pettersen (Minnesota) was one of Brainerd's top players in 2008.



Team Records



Single-Season Batting Records

Category		Name	School	Year
Average	.381	Mike Rouse	San Jose State	1999
RBI	51	John Purdom	Indiana State	2002
Runs	56	Andy Dirks	Hutchinson CC	2006
Stolen Bases	42	Mike Rouse	San Jose State	1999
Hits	91	Mike Rouse	San Jose State	1999
Doubles	17	Adam Symons	Northern Colorado	2007
Triples	7	Andy Dirks	Wichita State	2007
Home Runs	7	Xavier Scruggs	UNLV	2007
Walks	48	Steve Adams	Northwest State	2002
At Bats	240	Andy Dirks	Hutchinson CC	2006
	240	Erik Huber	Eastern Illinois	2006
Strikeouts	71	Ben Vannatter	Indiana State	2002
Games Played	67	Erik Huber	Eastern Illinois	2006
	67	Erik Komatsu	Vanguard	2006
	67	Aaron Seuss	Cal Baptist	2006

Single-Season Pitching Records

Category		Name	School	Year
ERA	1.60	Aaron Marsden	Nebraska	2002
Wins	9	Seth Gilleland	Northern Colorado	2006
Games	28	Tyler Brandon	Eastern Illinois	2007
	28	James Sammut	Fordham	2006
Strikeouts	92	Mike Ziroti	Eastern Illinois	2000
Walks	58	Mark Hanrahan	Iowa State	2000
Saves	13	Dustin Braud	Bossier Parish CC	2002
Games Started	14	Bryan Jensen	Marin (CA)	1998
Losses	9	Bryan Jensen	Marin (CA)	1998
Innings	94.0	Mark Hanrahan	Iowa State	2000
Hits	111	Jason Morgan-Voyce	St. Mary's	1998
Runs Allowed	61	Jason Morgan-Voyce	St. Mary's	1998
Earned Runs	49	Jason Morgan-Voyce	St. Mary's	1998

DID YOU KNOW?

The Brainerd Lakes Area Lunkers are the third Northwoods League franchise to play in Brainerd (Mighty Gulls, 1998-02; Blue Thunder, 2005-08).





Team Records

Career Batting Records

Category	Name	School	Year
Average	.366 Mike Rouse	San Jose State	99,00
RBI	51 John Purdom	Indiana State	2002
Runs	104 Andy Dirks	Wichita State	06,07
Stolen Bases	63 Andy Dirks	Wichita State	06,07
Hits	144 Andy Dirks	Wichita State	06,07
Doubles	26 Andy Dirks	Wichita State	06,07
Triples	11 Andy Dirks	Wichita State	06,07
Home Runs	7 Xavier Scruggs	UNLV	2007
Walks	73 Andy Dirks	Wichita State	06,07
At Bats	442 Andy Dirks	Wichita State	06,07
Strikeouts	83 Joe Lima	San Diego	99,00
Games Played	113 Andy Dirks	Wichita State	06,07

Career Pitching Records

Category	Name	School	Year
ERA	4.02 Kris Jiggitts	Tennessee Wesleyan	07,08
Wins	9 Seth Gilleland	Northern Colorado	2006
Games	28 Tyler Brandon	Eastern Illinois	2007
	28 James Sammut	Fordham	2006
Strikeouts	94 Kris Jiggitts	Tennessee Wesleyan	07,08
Walks	64 Kris Jiggitts	Tennessee Wesleyan	07,08
Saves	13 Dustin Braud	Bossier Parish CC	2002
Games Started	21 Kris Jiggitts	Tennessee Wesleyan	07,08
Losses	12 Kris Jiggitts	Tennessee Wesleyan	07,08
Innings	138.2 Kris Jiggitts	Tennessee Wesleyan	07,08
Hits	146 Kris Jiggitts	Tennessee Wesleyan	07,08
Runs Allowed	83 Kris Jiggitts	Tennessee Wesleyan	07,08
Earned Runs	60 Kris Jiggitts	Tennessee Wesleyan	07,08

DID YOU KNOW?

Mike Rouse's career .366 batting average in 1999 and 2000 is the best batting average in Northwoods League's history for a player who played two or more seasons.



The Home of the Lunkers

Stewart C. Mills, Sr. Field



Stadium Facts

Stadium Name: Stewart C. Mills, Sr. Field

Year Built: 1993

1st NWL Game Played at Stadium: June 1998

Seating Capacity: 2,500

Ballpark Dimensions: 324L, 370LC, 409C, 370RC, 321R

Ticket Prices: General Admission \$6, Reserved \$8, Season Tickets \$169, Hospitality Deck \$20

Parking: Free

Directions: From downtown Brainerd, take Hwy. 210 west to Hwy. 3. Go north on Hwy. 3; the ballpark will be on your right, across from a paper mill and behind other baseball fields. It's not marked from the highway, so watch closely.



Photo courtesy of Lakes County Journal

alexandria
beetles

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dive bats

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The Home of the Lunkers

Stewart C. Mills, Sr. Field Upgraded

An early-season 2008 visit to Mills Field in Brainerd prompted this response by NWL Director of Operations Curt Carstensen on his Northwoods League blog "The Hot Corner".

I was very pleasantly surprised with some of the improvements made to Stewart C. Mills Field in Brainerd since last season. Both the parking lot and the stadium concourse now have blacktop. In the past it was dirt and gravel. Both of the party decks have been upgraded. Two tiers of seating were added to the deck down the 3rd base line, which is a tremendous upgrade. That deck is open to the public and for \$20 a ticket is about as good of deal as you're going to find in baseball. It's all you can eat and drink light and dark beer, soda, bratwursts, hot dogs, burgers with a variety of fixings, potato salad and chips. You really can't go wrong with that deal and a truly great spot to view the game. On the 1st base line they've added on to the deck to provide a better viewing perspective for the fans seated in that private area. Again, great improvements, and the group rate is very competitively priced.

Looking ahead to 2009

At press time, snow is on the ground, and Joel Sutherland and crew are in the very early stages of preparing the Lunkers for their home opener. However, expect major upgrades to the bathrooms, concessions area, and press box for the 2009 season. This ballpark has great potential and the new ownership is sure to make the most out of it.

Top Five Blue Thunder Attendances

August 6, 2008	St. Cloud	1,875
June 5, 2007	Alexandria	1,276
June 23, 2005	St. Cloud	1,258
August 10, 2007	Thunder Bay	1,108
July 16, 2008	Duluth	1,104



alexandria
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moondogs
rochester
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cats

Brainerd Baseball History

By MIKE BIALKA, Brainerd Daily Dispatch



No contracts. No player salaries. No prima donnas. If that's the kind of baseball fans enjoy, Brainerd's new Northwoods League team hopes fans will check it out in its inaugural season this summer. The league features players with college eligibility remaining. That's the Northwoods' primary difference from minor leagues that had teams in Brainerd from 1994-96 before folding.

Embarking on its 16th season, the Northwoods has 14 franchises: Brainerd, Alexandria, Duluth, Mankato, Rochester and St. Cloud in Minnesota; Eau Claire, La Crosse, Green Bay, Madison and Wausau in Wisconsin; and Waterloo, Iowa; Battle Creek, Mich.; and Thunder Bay, Ontario.

The 68-game season begins May 28 and ends Aug. 16 with a best-of-three championship series between first- and second-half division playoff winners. The new Brainerd franchise, headed by St. Cloud River Bats owner Joel Sutherland, hopes to become a viable attraction in an area that has had a rich baseball tradition for more than a century. The Brainerd area produced two major league players in the late 1800s; two major league pitchers in the early 1900s; and five Brainerd High School graduates who went on to play in the minor leagues.

State champions

In 1894, Brainerd won the amateur baseball state championship. Two members of that squad, who pitched and played outfield, later played in the majors. Phyle (first name unknown) played for the New York Giants. Howe (first name unknown) played for the Chicago Cubs.

Charles Albert "Chief" Bender

Bender was born in Crow Wing County on May 5, 1884, and reportedly attended Indian reservation schools at White Earth and Pipestone. He pitched 16 seasons for the Philadelphia Athletics and Chicago White Sox. The 6-foot-2, 185-pound right-hander compiled a 210-127 career record in the majors with a 2.46 ERA. He appeared in five World Series with the Athletics, going 6-4 with a 2.44 ERA on three world championship teams. On May 12, 1910, Bender pitched a no-hitter for Philadelphia, defeating Cleveland 4-0. He died May 22, 1954, in Philadelphia. Bender was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1953.

Leslie Ambrose "Bullet Joe" Bush

Born Nov. 27, 1892, in Brainerd, Bush was the son of a Northern Pacific Railroad conductor. He played 17 seasons in the big leagues with Philadelphia, the St. Louis Browns, Boston Red Sox, New York Yankees, Washington Senators and Pittsburgh Pirates. He was 194-183 lifetime with a 3.51 ERA. Bush was a member of three world championship teams (he and Bender were teammates on the 1913 and 1914 Athletics). Bush was 2-5 in World Series play with a 2.67

Alexandria
berries

BRAINERD
LUNKENERS

Duluth
hustles

Mankato
moondogs

Rochester
honkers

St. Cloud
river bats

Thunder Bay
border cats





Brainerd Baseball History (cont.)

ERA. He was a teammate of Babe Ruth in 1918 when Boston won the World Series. Bush pitched a no-hitter Aug. 26, 1916, in a 5-0 victory over Cleveland. The 5-9, 173-pound right-hander died Nov. 1, 1974, in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Minor leagues

In 1933, the Brainerd Muskies joined the Northern League. But, with attendance averaging less than 35 fans per game, the Muskies folded after half a season and moved to Brandon, Manitoba, Canada. Muskies owner Ray Mergens offered a booster day promotion June 22, 1933, in an attempt to drum up interest in Brainerd but the turnout was so disappointing the month's payroll couldn't be met. The Muskies finished that season in Brandon and the franchise was sold in 1934 to Wausau, Wis.

In 1994, the Brainerd Bears and the North Central League debuted. The Bears won the inaugural playoff championship, defeating Regina, Canada, in a best-of-five series. That turned out to be the league's only championship series as the NCL folded July 14, 1995.

A year later the Brainerd Bobcats of the Prairie League opened May 30 with a 5-3 loss at Green Bay. The Bobcats ceased operations 21 days into the season, with average attendance of 240, lowest in the league.

Facilities

The Muskies played at the site of the present Bane Park in south Brainerd. For about 15 years Brainerd played baseball at the Fill Grounds across from what is now Franklin Performing Arts Center.

Memorial Park (now Mills Field) was built for \$35,000 and was dedicated July 30, 1948. It included lights, valued at \$17,000, and a grandstand that seated about 900 fans. The original lights and grandstand were removed in the 1970s. Memorial Park was renamed in honor of Stewart C. Mills Sr. on June 4, 1993. A grandstand, press box and new dugouts were added in 1994.

Lights were installed at Don Adamson Field, home of the Brainerd Warriors high school team, in June of 1987. A grandstand, concession stand and batting cage followed in subsequent years.

Brainerd Braves

In the early 1950s, Brainerd turned its attention to semi-pro Braves teams that included Herb Score and Gordy Coleman. Score pitched for the Braves in 1951 and signed the next year with the Cleveland Indians. The New York native compiled a 12-4 record for the Braves who won 28 of 37 games against the best opposition they could schedule. The left-hander, with a high leg kick and overpowering fastball, went on to pitch eight years in the majors with the Indians and White Sox, winning American League Rookie of the Year honors in 1955. He had a 55-46 major league record. Score was a Cleveland broadcaster until retiring after the 2000 season. He died Nov. 12, 2008.



Brainerd Baseball History (cont.)



Coleman, a 6-3, 208-pound first baseman, hit .344 with 23 RBIs for the Braves in 1951. The following season he batted .419 with 10 home runs and 35

RBIs as the Braves went 31-6. The Maryland native went on the play one year for the Indians and eight for the Cincinnati Reds. His major league career average was .273 with 98 home runs and 387 RBI. Coleman died March 12, 1994, in Cincinnati.

Marv Nutting

Nutting moved to Brainerd from Sebeka in 1926 and began playing for the Northern Pacific Railroad baseball teams of that era. He played for the Muskies and later managed the semi-pro Brainerd Braves. He was a part-time Cleveland scout, helping sign Score and Coleman and eventual Twins pitcher Dick Stigman. Nutting also used to sponsor an amateur team called "Marv's Aces" and was a long-time financial supporter of Brainerd baseball and softball programs. Nutting died June 1, 1999.

Brainerd Warriors

Since the demise of the semi-pro Braves, the Brainerd Warriors have produced several players who played minor league baseball.

Jerry Lyscio was a pitcher in the Twins, Astros and Royals organizations in the 1960s and 1970s.

Wayne Caughey was an infielder in the Dodgers, Twins and Pirates system in the 1970s and 1980s.

Tony Veith was an outfielder in the Cubs organization in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Gary Borg was an outfielder-first baseman in the Twins and Brewers system in the 1980s.

Reliever Todd Revenig pitched in two games for the Oakland Athletics in 1992 but missed the 1993 season with an elbow injury and never returned to the majors.

Tim Veith played for the Brainerd Bears in 1994.

Todd Vanek played for the Bears in 1994, for Thunder Bay in the Northern League in 1995 and 1996-97 for the Minot Mallards of the Prairie League.

One former Warrior baseball player remains associated with the majors. Tom Probst, a 1976 graduate, is director of medical operations for the Colorado Rockies.

In 1995 the Warriors won the Class 2A state championship, following a sixth-place finish in 1994 and a runner-up finish in 1996. Brainerd won the Class 3A championship in 2000.

(Sources for this story included The Baseball Encyclopedia and the Centennial Edition of the Brainerd Daily Dispatch, 1871-1971.)

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City Officials

James Wallin, *Mayor* City of Brainerd



"This is a great opportunity for the Brainerd community to showcase our beautiful parks and provide a wholesome experience for the whole family, and we are excited to have a new team with the Northwoods League!!"

Wayne Mooney, *Parks & Recreation* City of Brainerd



"We look forward to the upcoming baseball season and the unparalleled entertainment offered by the Northwoods League in our local community."

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