

BASEBALL

# Cards show no fear after early deficit

By Eric Morken  
emorken@echopress.com

The Alexandria baseball team has been playing as well as any program in Section 8-3A the last few weeks, and that confidence gained while winning nine of their last 10 games was much needed against Rocori on Thursday.

The Spartans (13-9) jumped out to a 3-0 lead in the first inning in Cold Spring. They knocked Alexandria starting pitcher Will Suchy from the mound after one frame, but the Cardinals were there to pick him up. Alexandria scored four unearned runs in the third inning that shifted the momentum and carried this team to a 6-3 win.

The Cardinals (14-8) played top-seeded Sartell-St. Stephen (19-3) at Faber Field in St. Cloud on June 8 with a trip to the 8-3A championship on the line.

"Giving up is not really something Alexandria does," Cardinals' junior Devin Cimbura said. "We know we can battle back. Once we put the ball on the barrel, great things happened after that."

Cimbura got his bat on the ball the loudest during that four-run third inning. Two Rocori errors aided Alexandria's effort in that frame, but Brock Lurfald, who reached base three times in the game, had a run-scoring ground out and JD Hennen added an RBI single.

The Spartans had a chance to limit the damage to two runs, but an error at third extended the inning. Cimbura came up



Photos by Eric Morken / Echo Press

Everybody on the Alexandria baseball team gets on their feet to welcome Elijah Holthaus (20) back to the dugout when his sacrifice bunt was part of a 4-run third inning for the Cardinals on June 3. Alexandria rallied from a 3-0 deficit after the first inning to beat Rocori and move on in the winner's bracket of the Section 8-3A tournament.

with runners on second and third and hammered a ball to right-center field that went for a triple and gave Alexandria the lead for good at 4-3.

Cimbura added another run-scoring hit in the fifth inning. All three of his RBIs came with two outs. He slid into third base head first ahead of the throw on that two-run triple. He let out a scream upon getting to his feet and flexed toward his teammates going crazy in the dugout.

"It's playoffs. We all want to make it to the (state) tournament, so it was just getting the boys hyped up right away," Cimbura said of the emotion. "We got down 3-0, and I just had to pick us up a little bit. It's just

a great game and when you get your team in that position, it's great."

The Cardinals could not have been in that position if not for the performance of Elijah Holthaus on the mound. Suchy, who has been steady all season with a 2.84 ERA and 34 strikeouts in 24 2/3 innings coming into Thursday, struggled with his control.

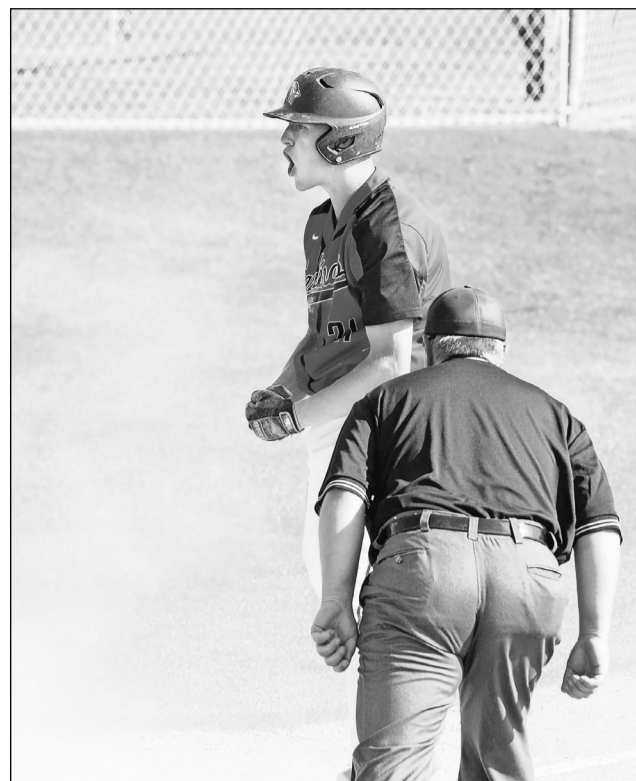
Rocori scored its three first-inning runs on one hit, three walks, a hit batter and a Suchy error on a play where the ball got under his glove.

Holthaus came into a situation where he couldn't allow the Spartans to create any more distance. The senior delivered by throwing six shutout innings. He

struck out four, and his defense ended the game on a Lurfald, to Shay Endres, to Nate Hammerback 4-6-3 double play.

"I wasn't expecting to come in that early," Holthaus said. "I was expecting Suchy to go deep. He's a heck of a pitcher, but in my mind I was just thinking dominate because I knew I had to step up as a leader on the team."

The Cardinals manufactured an insurance run in the sixth inning. Tyler Kludt came off the bench to pinch run after a Rocori error led off the frame. Kludt stole second and third base before Hagen executed a squeeze bunt



Alexandria's Devin Cimbura lets out a scream toward his dugout after his two-run triple in the third inning gave the Cardinals a 4-3 lead against Rocori in Cold Spring on June 31. Cimbura drove in three runs, all with two outs, to lead his team to the win.

perfectly to drive him in for the 6-3 lead.

"Base running is something we take extremely seriously," Alexandria coach Jake Munsch said. "We practice it all the time. We know it impacts the game day in and day out, and you saw that. That sixth run was massive for us."

Alexandria had a stretch of five straight losses from April 29 to May 6 that dipped its record below .500. Since then, the Cardinals' only loss entering this week was to state-ranked Willmar (20-2) in a 4-1 game. They had outscored opponents 58-12

in their nine wins since May 11.

"We did have a little slump in the middle of the season, but we've been playing out of our minds recently," Holthaus said. "It's so fun to watch and be a part of. As my last year in the high school program, it's just a heck of a season and a great way to finish it off so far. We're not done yet. We still got a lot to go."

The Cardinals' game against Sartell came after this issue of the Echo Press went to print. Visit [www.echopress.com](http://www.echopress.com) for immediate results of that game or see the June 11 print issue.

TENNIS

## Lueck, Partington win Cardinals' first section doubles title since 2005

By Jared Rubado  
jrubado@echopress.com

Alexandria's Jacob Partington and Gannon Lueck won the Section 8-2A doubles championship on June 3.

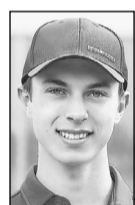
It marks the first time the Alexandria program has had a singles or a doubles champion since 2005. The Cardinals won both the singles and doubles section tournament that year.

The senior duo won all three matches last Thursday to clinch a spot in the doubles state tournament. The final win came against Becker's Ryan Bengtson and Eli Sheideman 6-3, 6-3. Partington and Lueck won all six sets they played in on Thursday.

"They served well the entire day and consistently pressured the opponents by crashing the net," Alexandria head coach Dave Ronning said. "They overwhelmed their opponents with put away and passing shots. They steadily improved throughout the subsection and section tournament and were rewarded with a trip to the state tournament."

Alexandria's second doubles team of Pieter Mulder and Andrew Wegner put up a valiant fight against the South's top seed. Bengtson and Sheideman beat Mulder and Wegner 6-4, 6-2 to survive a scare.

"The first set was very tight, and just a couple of points made the difference between winning and losing," Ronning said. "They fell behind early in the



Lueck

Partington

second but made a run. Both told me it was a good way to end their season with their heads held high. We are so proud of the way both of our doubles teams competed Thursday. To see Jacob and Gannon win it all was so sweet."

The first round of the Class AA doubles state tournament is June 10 starting at 10 a.m. at Prior Lake High School.

QUARTERFINAL- Ryan Bengtson-Eli Sheideman (BECK) def. Pieter Mulder/Andrew Wegner 6-4, 6-2; Jacob Partington-Gannon Lueck (A) def. Henry Sawatzke-Dylan Roiger (MONT) 6-1, 6-2; SEMIFINAL- Partington-Lueck def. Beck Barber-RJ Campbell (BRD) 6-1, 6-3; FINALS- Partington-Lueck def. Bengtson-Sheideman 6-3, 6-3



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BASEBALL

## New York Mills tops Ashby in extras

Parkers Prairie sees its season end

By Jared Rubado  
jrubado@echopress.com

The Ashby baseball team is one loss away from seeing its season come to an end after dropping an extra-inning game to New York Mills.

The Arrows (21-2) fell 5-4 in the eighth inning on a New York Mills (19-2) single. The Eagles tied the game in the seventh inning before winning it in the eighth. New York Mills is the top-ranked team in Class A through the QRF on Minnesota-scores.net, while Ashby is sixth.

Torin Olson went 3-for-3 at the plate for the Arrows. Jaden Norby took the loss for the Arrows. He threw seven innings and struck out six batters.

Ashby got to the winner's bracket game by beating Parkers Prairie 13-0 in five innings. Hunter Norby allowed one hit in his pitching performance. Norby struck out five batters and walked one.

The Arrows blew the door open with a 10-run second inning. Miles Hoff, Carter Spangler, Carson Spangler, Olson, Hunter Norby and Brodie Ecker had RBIs in the inning.

Parkers Prairie's season ended at the hands of Browerville-Eagle



Jared Rubado / Echo Press

Hunter Norby (left) and Jaden Norby laugh at the mound in Ashby's 13-0 win over Parkers Prairie in Bluffton to advance in the Section 6A baseball tournament on June 3.

Valley (7-14) in eight innings. The Panthers finished with a record of 9-12.

Ashby played in an elimination game in Bluffton on June 8 against Upsala-Swanville Area (19-3). The Patriots ended Ashby's run at a perfect season with a 4-3 win on May 24. The winner will play either Browerville-Eagle Valley or Belgrade-Brotonen-Elrosa (11-11).

Those games took place after this issue of the Echo Press went

to print. Visit [www.echopress.com](http://www.echopress.com) for immediate results or see the June 11 print issue of the paper.

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ASHBY 0 10 30X XX - 13  
PARKERS PRAIRIE HITTING- Brendan Johnson 0-2; Dylan Deblizen 1-2; Florian Koep 0-1, BB; Wyatt Murray 0-2; Brock Peterson 0-2; Cole Gessell 0-1; Riley Thoennes 0-1; David Revering 0-2; Jake Wagner 0-2; Chase Thieschafer 0-1; ASHBY HITTING- Torin Olson 0-2, R, BB; Robert Nelson 0-1; Carter Spangler 2-3, 2R, RBI; Jaden Norby 0-1, 2R, BB; Hunter Norby 2-2, 3R, 3RBI, BB; Evan Paulson 1-3, H, 2RBI; Ashton Ecker 0-1, R; Mattson Hoff 1-3, R, 2RBI; Miles Hoff 1-3, R, RBI, BB; Carter Spangler 0-2, R  
BROWERVILLE 000 320 01 - 6  
PARKERS PRAIRIE 000 041 00 - 5  
PARKERS PRAIRIE- Johnson 0-4, R, BB; Deblizen 1-3, R, 2RBI, BB; Koep 2-4, RBI; Murray 0-3, BB; Peterson 1-4; Thoennes R; Revering 2-4; Thieschafer 1-3, R, RBI, BB; Wegner 1-3, BB

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