

SPORTS



From left, Grand Rapids’ John Baker dives back to first base to beat the throw to Falls’ Jack Bartkowski in Saturday’s District 8 VFW Tournament game at Portage Park in Cohasset.

VFW

► continued from B1

and defeated Grand Rapids, 10-3.

The game was tied at 3-3 before the Falls added three runs in the bottom of the fifth and four more in the sixth.

“We really started to hit the baseball there toward the end,” Walls said. “We had a couple big hits. Kulig

had a huge hit and Clay Bergstrom, too.”

Kulig broke the tie in the bottom of the fifth when he doubled to drive in two runs, after which Bergstrom singled to drive in another run.

The Falls sent 10 batters to the plate in the sixth inning when Rapids starter Kyle Stram left the mound and was relieved by Jake Warren.

Bergstrom ended up with three hits and drove in three

runs for the Falls.

Wyatt Ulrich recorded the complete-game pitching victory, allowing the three runs on four hits with three hit batters while striking out nine.

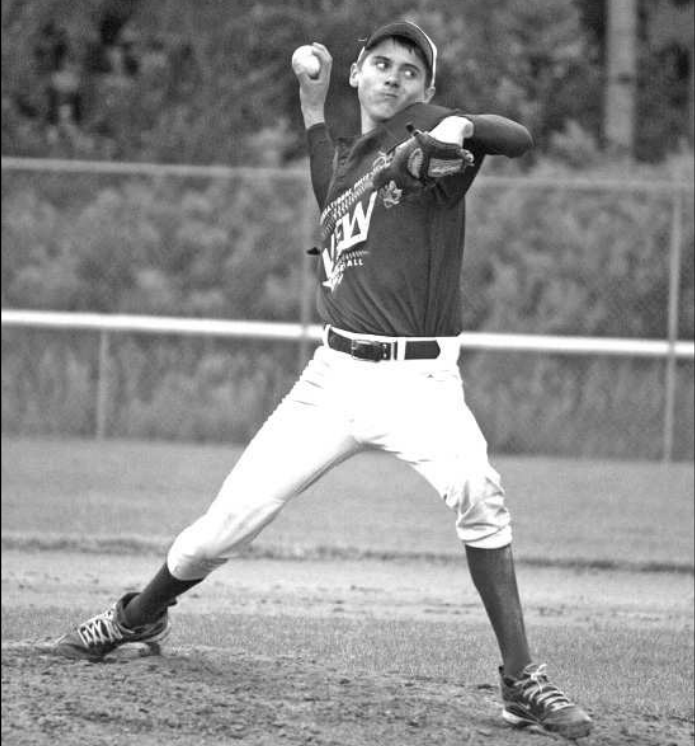
“Anytime you can come to a tournament and beat Hermantown and Grand Rapids in the same day, that’s pretty darn good,” Walls said.

The Falls advanced to the winners’ bracket game

Monday at Legion Field in Grand Rapids to face Esko, which opened the tournament Saturday with wins over Hibbing and Duluth East.

I. Falls 8, Herm. 0
Herm. 0-0-0 0-0-0 0-0-0 0-2-4
I. Falls 0-0-1 0-4-3 X-8-6-0
WP—Ben Humbert

I. Falls 10, G. Rapids 3
G. Rapids 2-0-0 0-1-0 0-3-4 2-2
I. Falls 1-0-0 2-3-4 X-10-14-1
WP—Wyatt Ulrich



The Falls VFW’s Wyatt Ulrich delivers a pitch in Saturday’s District 8 Tournament game against Grand Rapids. Ulrich scattered four hits in Falls’ 10-3 victory at Portage Park in Cohasset.



At left, the Falls VFW’s Jake Kulig crosses home plate to score in Saturday’s District 8 Tournament game against Grand Rapids. Kulig doubled to drive in two runs in Falls’ 10-3 victory at Portage Park in Cohasset.



At left, the Falls VFW’s Jackson Vollom tags Hermantown’s Blake Bergquist (13) at second base in Saturday’s opening-round district tournament game at Legion Field in Grand Rapids.

Vikings LB Bishop ‘a kid in a candy store’ at camp

MANKATO (AP)—Desmond Bishop forgot for a moment the new teammates he’s meeting, the new terminology he’s learning and the new environment he’s adjusting to.

That first practice with the Minnesota Vikings was satisfying simply for what it was. This linebacker was finally playing football again, his helmet buckled and his heart full.

“I felt like a kid in a candy store out there,” Bishop said, following the first workout of training camp. “It’s been almost a year since I lined up and just got in my stance and listened to the quarterback’s cadence and called plays and covered somebody. So it’s been a long time for me. I had so much fun.”

weak side. Bishop has been rotating there with veteran Marvin Mitchell and rookie Gerald Hodges, but that doesn’t mean it’s not his job to lose.

“He was a very good blitzer. He has some good athletic ability, and that’s what we try to find in our outside backer guys,” coach Leslie Frazier said. “And the ability to win one-on-one against halfbacks and fullbacks, but yet they’re good in coverage as well and they can take on lead blockers. And he’s shown that he can do that.”



Desmond Bishop

Bishop’s transition from Green Bay’s 3-4 defense to the 4-3 scheme here, as well as his condition coming off the torn right hamstring that kept him out all of last season, will be among the most scrutinized developments of the year for Minnesota. He acknowledged the challenge of mastering so much information at once, having just joined the Vikings last month after offseason practices were finished. But the 29-year-old brushed off any concerns about being out of position or out of shape.

The 4-3? He played in that alignment his whole career until the Packers switched in 2009.

“Football is football,” Bishop said.

His hamstring? He’s been running full speed for more than two months, even though he didn’t take part in any on-field workouts with Green Bay before being let go.

“I tested it as much as I possibly could. I’m 110 percent positive that it will hold up. So I have no fear. No limitations,” Bishop said.

The easily taken-for-granted experience of putting on the pads again is what’s on his mind. Beating the Packers, his former employer and now fierce rival, well, even that can wait.

“Maybe some games will be more important, honestly speaking, but I really circled every game. I’m that eager to play. To miss a whole year, I’m just excited to get back,” Bishop said.

The Vikings are set at the strong side spot with Chad Greenway, who’s starting his eighth season. Erin Henderson was moved to the middle this spring after free agency and the draft didn’t yield a starting-caliber replacement there for Jasper Brinkley. So that left an opening at Henderson’s prior position, the

Henderson approached Bishop on Friday afternoon as the newbie spoke to reporters about his first practice with the Vikings, putting his arm around his new teammate.

“We’re probably going to be best friends before it’s all said and done,” Henderson interrupted, before walking away.

Bishop had a built-in kinship already here with wide receiver Greg Jennings, the other free agent this season to leave the Packers for the Vikings. They’re rooming together during training camp.

“We’re definitely going to get closer as just teammates and as young men,” Jennings said. “What he brings to the table is something we need. He’s a guy who has experience. He knows how to do things. He knows how to go about winning. He’s experienced winning. But at the same time, he’s had to work to get everything that he’s had. Nothing has been handed to him. He’s had to work for everything he’s accomplished. So he knows how to go out and get what he wants.”

Jennings was drafted by Green Bay in 2006, Bishop in 2007.

“He’s definitely a good player. But his character, I think the way he motivates, the way he talks, a man of God, he’s a powerful figure off the field. That means a lot,” Bishop said.

Naturally, with all they have to learn here and focus on, the conversation at times will drift into comparing and contrasting this camp at Minnesota State University with the one they left behind in Wisconsin. But the less they think about their time with the Packers, the better they’ll be in position to succeed in purple.

“This is where we are,” Jennings said. “We’re both excited about it.”

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