**DUGOUT CHATTER**

By: Rick Zollner – Pipestone Area

President MSHSBCA

The 2019 MSHSBCA Fall Clinic will be held October 25-26-27. The NEW site is the Double Tree by Hilton, 1500 Park Place Blvd, Minneapolis. Great speakers from college and high school programs are lined up to present. Rob Smith (head coach Ohio University); Brian Grunske (assistant coach South Dakota State University); Pete Meyer (head coach Lisle, IL); Paul Babcock (assistant coach Tinley Park, IL); and David Kirilloff (President of The Language of Hitting and father to top Twins prospect Alex Kirilloff). The MSHSBCA also hopes to have a Twins player or front office person in attendance on Friday night for a Q and A session.

Also, consider attending the HOF Banquet on Saturday the 26th at 7:00pm, and the FCA Breakfast on Sunday the 27th at 7:30am. We have a fantastic 2019 Hall of Fame class. They include Dale Bruns (Holdingford), John Fellows (Ortonville), Hans Hanson (Perham), Jack Kelly (Windom), Bill Lechner (Hill-Murray) and Bucky Lindow (Cannon Falls). Other award winners include: Jim Dimick Retired Coaches Award – Mike Tomsche (EV-W) and Robert Kochevar (Eveleth); Dick Siebert Award – Don Gawreluk (Anoka); Angelo Giuliani Award – Herald Brutlag (Maple Lake); Rob Fornasiere Assistant Coaches of the Year – Scott Courtwright (Mounds View) and Charlie Burg (St. Cloud Cathedral); Tink Larson Field of the Year Award – Minnewaska Area; Craig Anderson Ethics in Coaching Award – Mike Smith (Totino Grace). Please consider nominations of deserving people in your area for these awards. All information can be located at the MSHSBCA.org website. Also, congratulations to Paul Twenge (Minnetonka) for being named the 2019 Region 5 Coach of the Year by the National High School Athletic Coaches Association!

The MSHSBCA would like to congratulate and acknowledge the following coaches for leading their teams to state championships. Class A – Brian Kingery (BOLD); Class AA – Joe Wicklund (Marshall School, Duluth); Class AAA – Matt Kelly (St. Thomas Academy); and Class AAAA Brian Sprout (East Ridge).

The MSHSBCA also named Coaches of the Year. Congratulations to the following coaches. Class A - James Cortez (Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sundberg); Class AA - Joe Wicklund (Marshall School, Duluth); Class AAA - Cole Deibele (Monticello); Class AAAA - Brian Sprout (East Ridge).

The 2019 Play Ball! MN All-Star Series was again a great event! The NORTH All-Stars won the series (4th time overall)! Congrats to Brian Gruber (Minnewaska Area) and Paul Walsh (Parkers Prairie) on doing a terrific job in coaching the NORTH team to the 2019 series win! The Todd Oakes Award for top pitching performance was awarded to Eli Sundberg of Chisolm and the Dale Welter MVP Award went to Logan Jasper of Duluth Denfeld. The Mr. Baseball Award (player of the year in MN) went to Drew Gilbert of Stillwater Area.

The NFHS, our national organization, also approved changes that will take effect January 1, 2020. Rule 3-1-4 will allow the starting designated hitter to also be a starting defensive player. Utilizing this option, the player has two positions: defensive player and designated hitter. The team would begin the game with nine starters - nine defensive players – one of whom also assumes the role of the designated hitter. This rule change is similar to the pitcher/dh rule we utilized a few years ago. Another rule change will be all baseballs and chest and body protectors shall meet the NOCSAE standard at the time of manufacture. For more information please visit [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org) website. Click on “Activities & Sports” at the top of the home page and select “Baseball.”

John Wilkens did a multitude of jobs for our association. Since his retirement we have had much change to our organization. Craig Anderson (retired Pine Island coach) has agreed to become our Executive Director and Troy Urdahl (St. Anthony Village) is our Associate Executive Director. If you would like to become involved and share any of your unique talents please reach out to these gentlemen or any other members of the advisory or executive board. We are always looking for input on how to make our organization the best it can be!

Please remember to update your membership to the MSHSCA and the MSHSBCA for the 2019-2020 season. The membership provides liability insurance that we all need plus it provides eligibility for your players to receive post-season awards. Also, consider membership in one or both of the national associations (BCA or ABCA). Additionally, follow us on Twitter @mshsbca, and continue to check for updated information and what is going on at our website: [www.mshsbca.org](http://www.mshsbca.org). Also, at this link you can check out all the current baseball records in the state of Minnesota. If a player of yours tied or broke any records please contact Tink Larson at [tlarson@hickorytech.net](mailto:tlarson@hickorytech.net).

With all the changes to our organization I hope ALL coaches will make the effort to attend our MSHSBCA meeting on Saturday, October 26th at 8:00AM. This is a great time to ask questions and learn more about what is going on with high school baseball in our great state of Minnesota.