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PINSTRIPE TIMES

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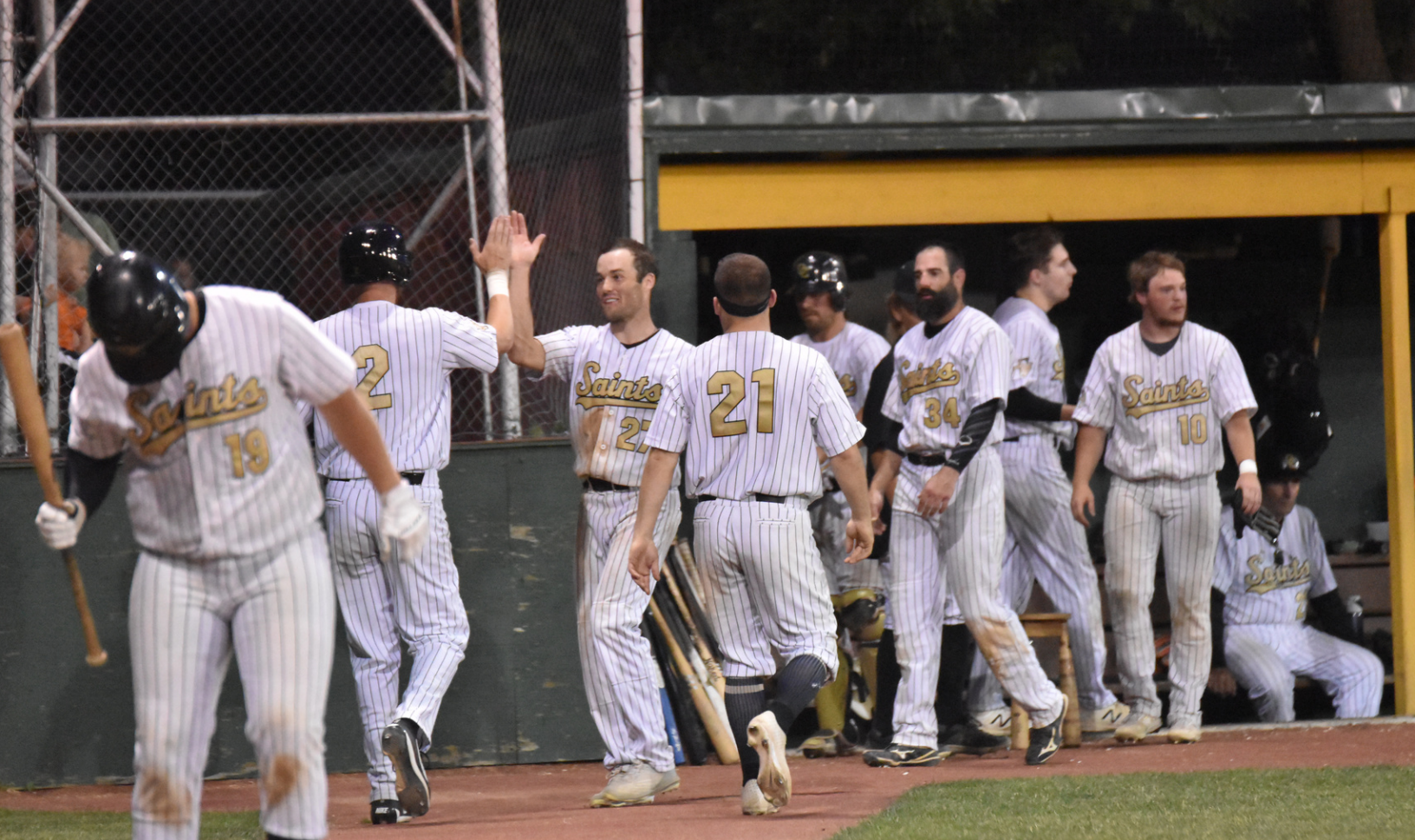
SAINTS HIT!



Historically speaking, the Saints have been known as a "pitching and defense" type of ballclub. Sure, there's been seasons where the D-C hitters tore the cover off the ball; thinking back to the stacked lineups of Riewer, Opsahl, McKinley, Birkholz, Bergstrom, Burkstrand, Pokornowski, of the early to mid-2000s, the Saints have had their fair share of swingers. But it's been the lights out pitching and solid defense that more often than not, guided those teams to the State Tournament.

This season, the biggest strength of this Saints roster seems to be the sticks. Averaging just south of 9 runs per game, the offense has lead this team to an overall record of 11-10 heading in to July. Atop the North Star League leaderboard, you'll find young shortstop Noah Halonen with a league batting average of .438, just behind Delano's Jeff Althoff (.451) and Maple Lake's Riley Decker (.447). Accompanying Halonen amongst the league leaders are names like Steve Boger (.417), Tyler Brandel (.349), Jordan Flick (.340), Jim Althoff (.324), and Collin Krick (.302). Flick is also tied with Loretto's Josh Koskie for the league lead in triples with 4, while Brandel is T-1 with Buffalo's Tommy Eckstein with 4 home runs.

A little out of the ordinary for the Saints to flood the offensive leaderboard? Sure. But if the pitching staff can hold their own down the stretch, the Swingin' Saints hitters may be able to drive them into and deep in the postseason.



Upcoming Events

We've hit the dog days of July, and there's plenty of baseball action to come before the postseason, starting with a three-game, North Star League homestand this week.

On Wednesday night, the Saints will play host to the Rockford Crows. Back in mid-June, D-C bested the newest NSL members at their park, shutting them out 13-0 behind a Jordan Flick 2-hitter. The Saints collected 7 free passes on top of 13 hits in the contest. They'll look to keep the offense rolling on "#DeckTax Night". First pitch is 7:00pm.

On Friday night, the Saints will host the Hutchinson Huskies for "KDUZ Night". There will be plenty of prizes provided by the great folks at KDUZ, so be sure to get there early and enter your name to win. Last season, the Saints and Huskies split, each winning at their home ballparks. Game time is scheduled for 7:30pm.

The week will wrap up with a Sunday afternoon tilt with the Maple Lake Lakers. Just two weeks ago, the Lakers smacked around the Saints pitchers at Irish Stadium. D-C will be looking to get their revenge on "College Day" (bring your college ID for free admission). Start time is 1:00pm.

The schedule typically gets tough this time of year, and 2022 is no different. Come on out to cheer on your hometown Saints!

NSL Standings

SAINTS HAVE BUSINESS TO TAKE CARE OF

Well, to put it bluntly, the Saints are behind the 8-ball heading into July. While their overall record stands at 11-10, the North Star League record is 4-9, currently seating D-C in 9th, on the bubble and potentially playing into the Region 12C tournament.

The good news is there's still 9 NSL bouts left to play, and history shows that anything can happen in this league. The opponents left standing in the Saints way include the Rockford Crows, Hutchinson Huskies (x2), Maple Lake Lakers, Litchfield Blues, Buffalo Bulldogs, Montrose-Waverly Stingers, Delano Athletics, and Maple Plain Diamond Devils. Against these opponents, the Saints have fared 3-4.

The top 7 teams in the league earn an automatic bid into the Region 12C tournament, while the 8-12 seeds have to take the hard road in a pigtail playoff to earn the elusive #8 seed. If the season were to end today, the Saints would find themselves in that playoff, facing off

with the Maple Plain Diamond Devils. Fortunately, there is still time to right the ship and evade the play-ins.

So what will it take for the Saints to find their way in to the Region 12C tournament? For starters, they'll need to continue to hit. Runs have come aplenty for D-C, and they'll need to keep coming as they face some potent offenses in July.

Aside from hitting, the Saints pitchers need to step up and take control of games. The starting pitchers need to give their absolute best to get through what they can, while the bullpen needs to instill trust when taking the ball and finishing out games. There have been flashes of good pitching, but the key for the Saints will be to get the very best out of their young starters and calling to the pen before the trouble starts.

It won't be an easy July by any means, but the Saints are looking forward to the challenge.

