

# Matt Paulson

St. Louis Park

2002 MVP

Class A

**In his own words:** 2002 was the first year that everybody went to wood. We started in 1999 I think. So when everyone else switched over, in a way, we had an advantage. But in the end it all comes down to pitching.

I remember that Air Freight just had a great staff. They had the Mauer brother and they had a kid by the name of Brian Whinnery and he was kind of in his prime. I think in one of their games he struck out 18 guys, but it might've been another year. But he was really a tough pitcher.

The games were good. Stockmen's was kind of a slugfest (Minnetonka 15, Stockmen's 10). The game against Rooster was really the best game in a way, other than the championship, because that team was so good. They had a guy that played in the big leagues and his brother. They had a really good team and their pitcher pitched a great game and we managed to get a few runs. Then the Friday night game against Air Freight we got just trounced by them 9-0. I think we only had about four hits and I had two or three of them. Then the game against Lyon's Pub was good too. They had some good pitching and we won 8-7.

The second championship game against Air Freight was exciting. We won the first game 3-1 and we were losing the second 5-0 going into the eighth. I think it was Billy Mauer on the mound and he was throwing really well. In the top of the eighth our leadoff hitter singled, then Chris Duda hit a triple. Then Joe Witt pinch hits. We had a guy, Mike Reeder, who was just incredible, but he was feeling like he was hurt, I just think he wasn't feeling well or something. The reason Joe wasn't playing is because he said I'm not playing today, I'm not hitting well. He went in and he hit a home run that had to go 480 feet. It went over both fences at Midway. This was all happening with three pitches. Then Chris Johnson comes up and he hit one into the old boat in left field that used to be at Midway, on the fourth pitch. Now it's 5-4 and we've scored four runs on four pitches and two consecutive homers.

So they switched pitchers and they brought in Whinnery. He threw a changeup to lead me out and I took it. Then I just had a feeling he was going to go down and away and he threw the next pitch and I hit it off the right field foul pole. So now we were six pitches in, three consecutive homers and five runs. It was an exciting comeback. Then he threw at the next guy, Pat Fix, and the benches cleared. After order was restored, we went into the next inning and they loaded the bases with nobody out. Then we brought in Neil Koepcke and he struck out three consecutive guys. Then we loaded the bases, I was on third because they had walked me and Aaron Houdeschell got a single and that was it. That was pretty exciting, winning in 10 innings.



- Matt Paulson, St. Louis Park, 2002
- Third Baseman
- Went 14 for 24 at the plate
- Batted .583 for the tournament
- Hit one home run, three doubles and drove in four RBI

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