

Tony Richards

Minnetonka

2003/2006 MVP

Class A

In his own words: In 2003, I remember the people I played with the most. We were such a team where if somebody wasn't having a good game somebody else would pick up the slack and go on. We got in the mode that year where we were playing really good baseball. We got to the state tournament. We had issues in the past where we were odds-on-favorites to win. It was well deserving, in my opinion, with the players that we had. Some years we didn't perform and this year everybody had confidence that we were going to put a good tournament together and we would be there in the end. This was now my third year playing with the Millers and I found myself in a leader role throughout the year and that kind of happened I guess. The MVP could have gone to a few different players. I just ended up having a good stat line I guess and drove in a few key runs here and there. It was good to get it, but I thought that I should have shared that with Mitch Swaggert.

In 2006, I hit a walk off home run to center field against Wesley Homes to force another championship game. I know why they pitched to me because I had Joe hitting in front of me and had Steve Schmitz hitting behind me. The pitcher came out and it was basically 1-2 (outs) and the manager wasn't going to pull him because he was carving us up pretty good. I came up and I thought maybe they'll put me on. I thought at most they'll throw four pitches on the outside part of the plate. Won't come back into me. He was throwing away and the first fastball had a little bit of a run back over the plate. It caught the outer third. I went up there with a clear mind, not thinking I've got to hit a home run. Nothing. My only thought was to just get on because Steve was swinging a good bat behind me.

I was surprised that Shelly went down ahead of me, but like I said the guy was a pretty crafty left-hander. He threw one there and I just said keep your head on it and don't open up. I stayed on it and drove it out of the park. I hit it and I knew I hit it hard enough but you play in that park (Parade Stadium) you don't know, that ball can go for days out there. I didn't hit a towering high shot. I just hit pretty much a bullet out to centerfield and I was running full bore, I didn't watch. I hit it and I knew I hit it good and I needed to get on second. That was the only thing on my mind. I never hit one out of centerfield there. I always wanted to hit one over the 425 or 450 or whatever it is. It worked out.

That would have been the second time we came back through the losers bracket. We had confidence that our guys—I think we were the first team to come back through the losers bracket—and I knew we could do it. You couldn't ask for a better leader than Kevin Hoy. He made sure that if you were going to be a part of that team, you were good person. He found a way to find people that all wanted to win and he made a home for that.



- Tony Riachards, Minnetonka, 2003
- Catcher
- Batted 12 for 17, for a .706 batting average
- Hit two doubles and one homerun
- Tony Riachards, Minnetonka, 2006
- Hit 8 for 22, for a .364 batting average
- Hit three doubles and one home run
- Plated six RBI



The beautiful thing about Minnesota's state tournament is that it is a double elimination tournament. It allows every team to have a hiccup and keep playing. Some days the ball just doesn't roll your way."

