

MINNESOTA STATE BASEBALL TEAM SWEEPS UPPER IOWA



John Cross

A diving Minnesota State first baseman Dan Allen couldn't come up with a second-inning foul ball catch Wednesday, but later hit his first homer of the season in the Mavericks' 9-1 Game 1 win over Upper Iowa. MSU also beat the Peacocks in the nightcap.

Tuning up

Dolenc delivers five hits; Bowyer wants better location from pitchers

By Brian Ojanpa
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MANKATO — Minnesota State tuned up for the start of the North Central Conference season Wednesday with a nonconference doubleheader sweep over Upper Iowa.

The Mavericks won 9-1 and 5-3 over the Peacocks at the blustery MSU Baseball Complex.

MSU (16-8), which opens NCC play Saturday at Minnesota-Duluth, got a five-hit day from emerging outfielder Mark Dolenc while Mavericks pitchers held the Peacocks to 12 hits — six in each game.

Afterward, though, MSU coach Dean Bowyer rued the wildness he saw from his pitching staff.

"We're starting to play better discipline-wise, but we're still walking too many people," he said. "We've just got to throw more strikes. (First-game winner Dane) Secott threw too many

pitches. Too many walks. He's got to get better location."

Secott (3-1) walked two and hit a batter in five innings. He allowed four hits and fanned six.

In the first game, MSU scored three times in the second and broke the game open in the sixth, with Allen starting a five-run burst with a solo homer.

Freshman Jay Bresnahan was 2 for 4 with an RBI single, and Eric Austvold and Dolenc had two-run doubles.

In the second game, the Mavericks put up two runs in the first inning, and added three more in the fifth on RBIs from Ryan Greene, Bresnahan and Ben Kaus.

Dolenc was 2 for 4 and freshman infielder Tony Altavilla had two hits. Winning pitcher Jon Bjelland (4-1) allowed four hits, fanned five, and walked four in five innings.

Dolenc, a junior from Eagan, was

4-1 as a pitcher last year and now is showing an outfield prowess Bowyer said he saw last summer, when Dolenc played with the Mankato Twins, the Minnesota Class B Amateur Baseball champions.

"He's our fastest runner, and we've just got to get him some at-bats," Bowyer said.

Bowyer said he wants to tighten up the pitching because he doesn't see this year's squad as being as potent offensively as last year's team, whose 36 wins tied a school single-season record. "We won't score as many runs as we did last year, so that's where the pitchers come in."

Notes

The Upper Iowa Peacocks roster includes players from 10 states (seven from California) plus Canada. ... Peacocks coach Mark Danker was one of the ghost players in the 1988 movie "Field of Dreams" filmed in Dyersville, Iowa. ... MSU sophomore pitcher Nick Fellman of Eagan picked up his eighth save of the year Wednesday. He was 4-0 with a 1.82 ERA in 2005.