

Hoffmann among the highlights of 2009

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NEW ULM - The Year In Sports 2009, in New Ulm is led by Jamie Hoffmann's roller coaster ride in professional baseball beginning with the Los Angeles Dodgers and ending with the World Champion New York Yankees.

It was a year for Hoffmann that began in AA before being promoted to AAA Albuquerque. An injury saw Hoffmann promoted to the Dodgers and on May 24, Hoffmann got his first major league hit.

Facing the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim pitcher Matt Palmer, Hoffmann hit a fastball over the fence in left field for three-run home run. What made it more special is that it was done in front of members of his family who were in attendance at the game.

Hoffmann remained with the Dodgers until he was sent back down to AAA. Later, he was put on waivers by the Dodgers who removed him from their 40-man major league roster in what the Dodgers described as a "business decision."

He later re-signed with the Dodgers. But like a curveball things changed for Hoffmann again. He was taken in the Rule 5 draft by the New York Yankees (who traded pitcher Brian Bruney to the Washington Nationals for the rights) and taken with the first overall pick in the draft.

Hoffmann must remain on the Yankees 25-man major league roster for one year.

In another highlight, Hoffmann started in right field for the Dodgers against the Chicago Cubs in a game on ESPN and made a diving catch before throwing out a runner at home.

That is by far the top sports story in New Ulm for 2009. Here are the rest in no certain order.

Lyle Erickson and Dale Bannerman both resigned as the boy's and girl's basketball coaches respectively at New Ulm High School.

Kory Kettner was hired as Erickson's replacement but resigned before the season began citing "philosophical differences" with the New Ulm Basketball Association. Shane Heiderscheidt, who was to be Kettner's assistant, took over as the head coach. Matthew Dick was hired to replace Bannerman for the girl's program.

The New Ulm Cathedral Greyhound football team had another banner year, posting an 11-1 mark falling 21-8 to Blooming Prairie in a Class A state quarterfinal football game.

New Ulm lost a very special person when Ken "Lefty" Lindmeyer passed away. Lefty was a promoter of all three high school sports programs and also drove the buses for all three schools for sporting events. He also drove the bus for New Ulm Legion Gold. He always did the positive things for the kids and he will be missed.

It is rare when a person bowls a 300 game. But it was a special day when Ken Paa bowled his first 300 game and a 786 series. That same day and in the same league, his brother Carl bowled a 722 series.

For the first time since 1995, the New Ulm Cathedral girl's basketball team defeated Minnesota Valley Lutheran.

It was a year where New Ulm Cathedral's Sam Dengerud and New Ulm High School's Kayla Altmann each scored their 1,000th career point. Altmann became the first girl in school history to accomplish that.

The Minnesota Twins winter caravan was in New Ulm with Jason Kubel along with broadcaster Dick Bremer and former player Tony Oliva.

Stef Dietz was named the volleyball coach at New Ulm Cathedral.

Former New Ulm High School boy's hockey coach Tom Macho was inducted into the Minnesota Coaches Association Hall of Fame. In 31 years, Macho compiled a 375-290-11 record.

The New Ulm Eagle girl's hockey team earned their first-ever trip to to the Class A Minnesota State High School Hockey Tournament. They finished and beat Eveleth-Gilbert coached by their former coach Dave Kunz.

New Ulm Cathedral softball coach Bob Mertz recorded his 600th career coaching win.

The Minnesota Valley Lutheran track team does well in the state track tournament. Josh Danell finishes fourth in the 110-meter hurdles and ninth in the 300 hurdles. The 4x400 team of Danell, Kyle Bergemann, Christian Evers and Bryce Krohn finished fourth.

The University of Minnesota football coaches held a clinic at the Holiday Inn for area football coaches.

Pat Brinkman of New Ulm High School finishes second in the State Wrestling Tournament in the 215-pound weight class.

Garrett and Kyle Fischer of New Ulm High School are selected to play in the Lion's All-Star Baseball game in Chaska.

New Ulm hosted the State American Legion Baseball Tournament and Al Flor took over as manager of the New Ulm Brewers.

Randy Cox was named the new baseball coach at Martin Luther College and his wife Rebecca was named the volleyball coach at MLC.

Former Minnesota Valley Lutheran basketball player Andy Beilke leads Southwest State University to the Central Regional Championship.

Kyle Reinarts from New Ulm High School is selected to play in the Chicago Showcase Hockey Tournament.

Altmann and Kyle Fischer of New Ulm High School, Amanda Burk and Bryce Krohn of Minnesota Valley Lutheran and Katie Larson and Derek Wilfahrt of New Ulm Cathedral are selected as the New Ulm Club's Outstanding Senior Athletes of the Year.

The New Ulm Sports Central website begins and is updated daily.

The late Stan Wilfahrt is inducted into the Minnesota Interscholastic Hall of Fame. (*NUSC Note: Stan was inducted into the Minnesota state high school baseball coaches hall of fame and also the Minnesota High School League athletic director Hall of Fame in 2000.*)

For the third straight year, the New Ulm Eagle boy's hockey team losses in the sectional finals.

The New Ulm Cathedral baseball team takes third place in the State Class A Baseball Tournament and finishes with a 24-5 record.

The New Ulm Eagle baseball team loses in the 3AA sectional finals for the second straight year, this time to Luverne. In two years, the Eagles have a 41-9 mark. In that loss to Luverne, Kyle Fischer strikes out 14 batters.

For the third straight year, Johnny Larson wins the New Ulm Invitational Golf Tournament.

Cassandra Reed of New Ulm High School becomes the first NUHS soccer player to sign a Letter of Intent to play college soccer. She signs with Embry Riddle Aeronautical University of Prescott, Arizona.

The Minnesota Wild come to the New Ulm Civic Center with players Cal Clutterbuck and Colton Gilles along with announcer Tom Reid.

The Eagle softball team loses twice in the Section 3AA finals to Pipestone.

Marissa Klimmek of New Ulm High School sets a school record in the 800-meter run with a time of 2:22:19.