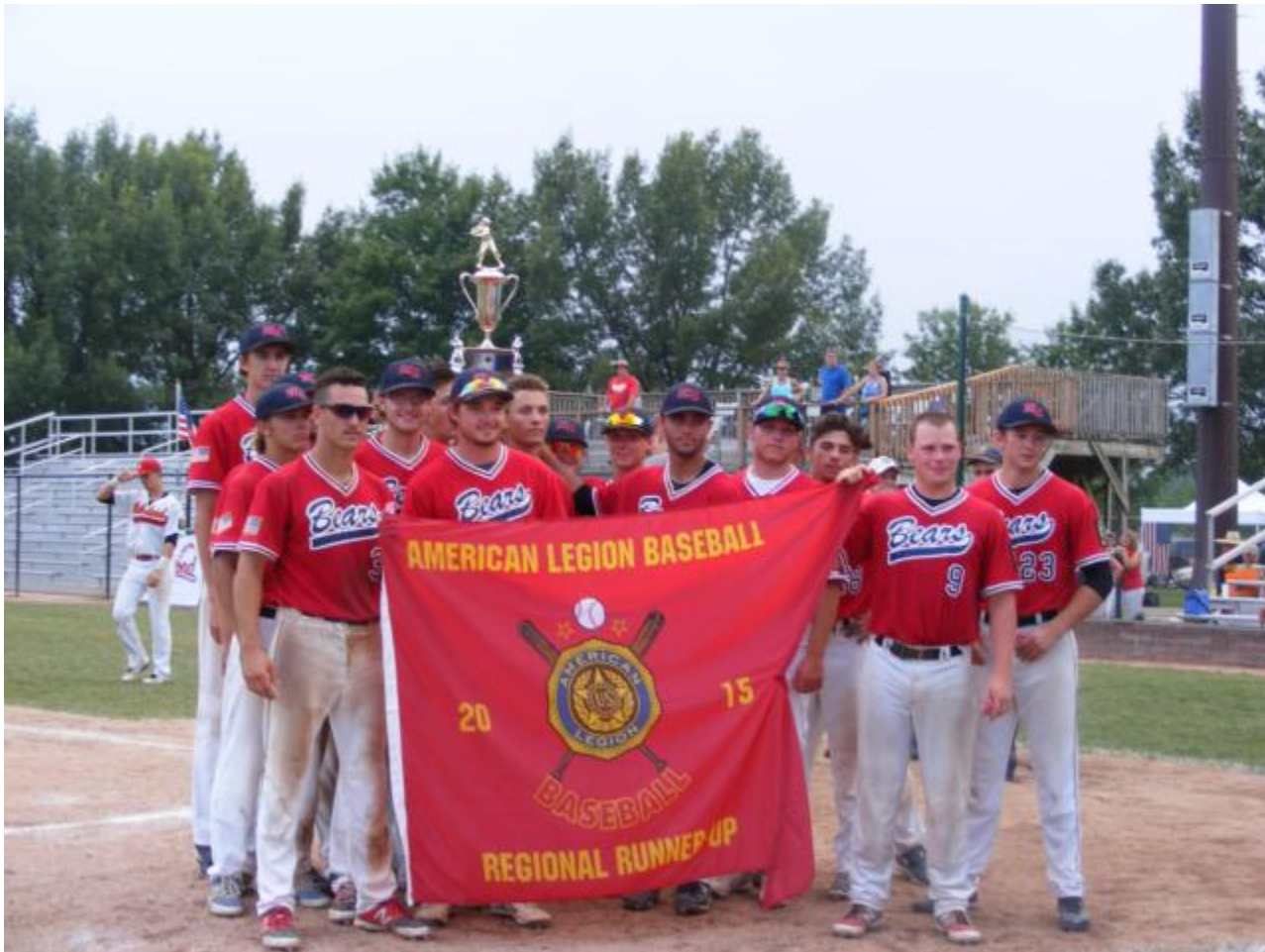


American Legion announces SIUE will host 2016 Regional Baseball Tourney at Simmons Baseball Complex

January 22 2016 1:30 PM



ALTON – American Legion officials have announced that Southern Illinois University Edwardsville will be the host site of the 2016 site for the American Legion Great Lake Regional Baseball Tournament at the Simmons Baseball Complex.

“The partnership between Alton Post 126 and Edwardsville Post 199 in hosting the 2015 American Legion Great Lakes Regional at Lloyd Hopkins field was a very successful endeavor,” said **Wally Owczarzak, Alton Post 126 American Legion Commander**. “It was truly exciting to watch our boys receive the runner-up trophy and almost advance to the World Series.”

“I’m looking forward to continuing this partnership with Edwardsville Post 199, as we again host the 2016 American Legion Great Lakes Regional at Roy E. Lee field at SIUE. This summer should prove just as exciting,” added Owczarzak.

This official announcement followed thoughtful consideration of all interests – players, communities involved, sponsor support, facility, and the future of American Legion Baseball. The 2016 Great Lakes Regional Tournament, a 6-day event, is held in early August. The Great



Lakes Regional Host Committee is led by **Regional Tournament Director and Metro East Bears General Manager, Dennis Sharp**; Operations/Event Ceremonies/Asst. Director – Patrick McGinnis; Sponsorship Chair – Matt McSparin; Media & Public Relations/Ticket Sales - Ron Tanner; and Video/Promotion - Rick Vaughn.

The following is an excerpt from the final report submitted to American Legion Baseball in Indianapolis by Regional Tournament Director, Derrick Ater, Lewiston, Idaho:

“In truth, without the tireless (and cheerful) efforts of Dennis (Sharp) and all of these fine individuals (the local tournament host committee) this tournament simply would not have been the phenomenal success that it was!”

“We salute Alton for their efforts in 2015. It should be noted that The Atrium Hotel, the Grandpa Gang, more than 30 local and regional sponsors, food vendors, and scores of local volunteers were wonderful to work with,” noted Bears GM, Dennis Sharp. “A sudden wave of summer storms really took a toll on Hopkins Field at the onset of the 2015 tournament. Everyone involved had to scramble to find and then finance use of an alternative venue that was playable.”

"The participating teams were very gracious but it was a mental and physical drain on everyone," Sharp said. "We owe it to the players and American Legion Volunteers to play the 2016 tournament where weather won't be an issue. The Simmons Baseball Complex, with an artificial surface and state-of-the-art drainage system, is pretty well rain proof. Rain delays, rain outs, and finding an alternative venue outside the River Bend presented a logistics and financial hardship in 2015 that we simply cannot afford to repeat. Last year the host team's game was forced to move to GCS Field in Sauget (home of the Gateway Grizzlies) because Hopkins Field became unplayable after a cloud burst."

Alton Post 126 Commander Owczarzak is also thrilled that moving the tournament to Simmons Field in 2016 will afford Edwardsville Post 199 the opportunity enjoyed by Alton Post 126 this year. Half of the Regional Host Squad Metro East Bears legion roster comes from Edwardsville. We couldn't be happier with SIUE and the Community of Edwardsville stepping up to accommodate this move”.

The American Legion Baseball Headquarters in Indianapolis publishes a manual of expectations and protocols for host communities to follow. This places a considerable amount of scrutiny on the local organizers to protect the quality and integrity of the tournament's rich tradition of excellence. They stress that a field's resiliency in the event of poor weather condition factor into the selection of host sites. That includes everything from the field and staff to player and umpire housing to transportation and

management of the finances. Everything is audited by ALB Headquarters in Indianapolis.

The American Legion was chartered by Congress in 1919 as a patriotic veteran's organization. Focusing on service to veterans, service-members and communities, the Legion evolved from a group of war-weary veterans of World War I into one of the most influential nonprofit groups in the United States. Today, membership stands at over 2.4 million in 14,000 posts worldwide.

For more information about American Legion Baseball or sponsorships for the 2016 Regional Tourney contact: Dennis Sharp, (618) 920-8938 or post126baseball@yahoo.com. To review info from the the 2015 Regional Tourney, <http://www.leaguelineup.com/welcome.asp?url=legion&sid=561392132>

