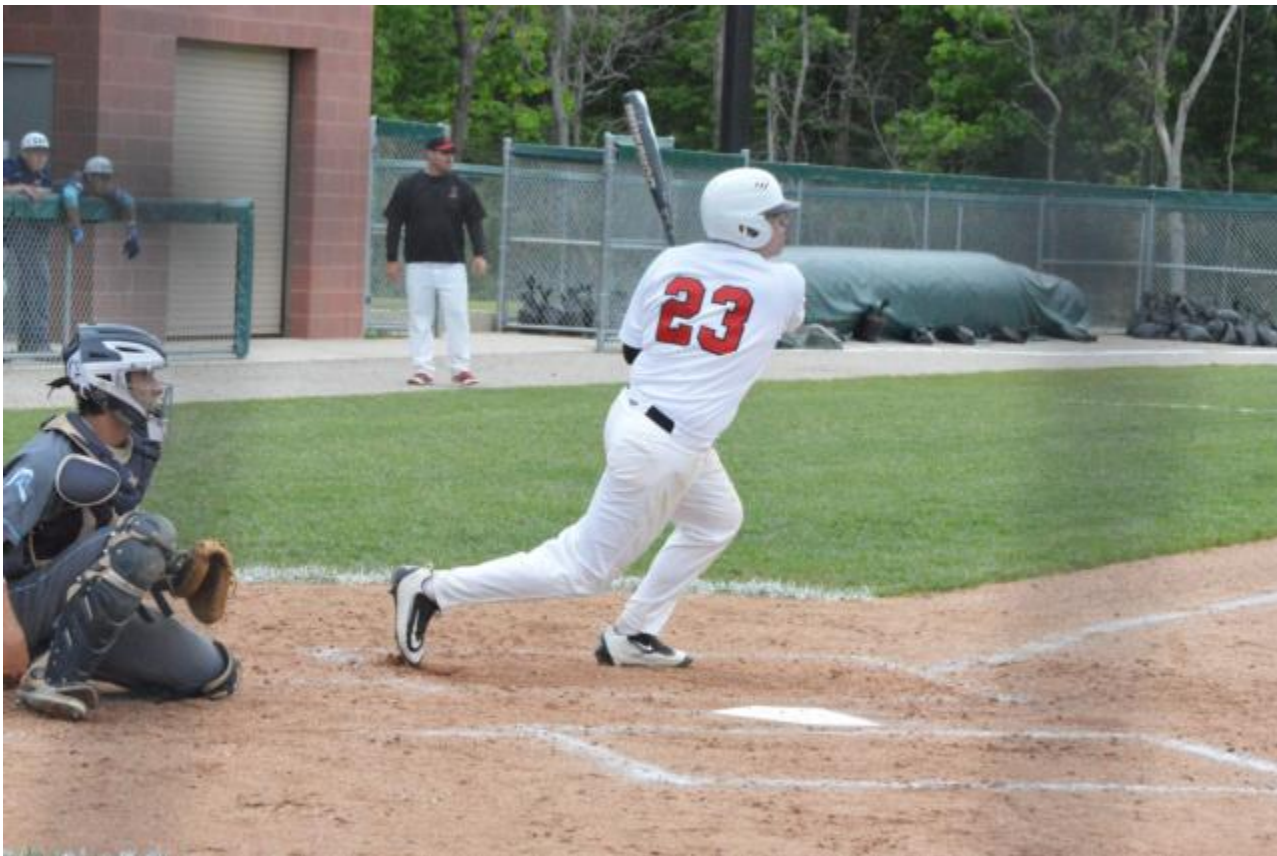


Redbirds honor 13 baseball seniors with pride in final regular season home game

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
May 20 2016 6:35 AM



GODFREY – This year's group of seniors for **Alton's baseball team** have contributed quite a bit to the program since they started with the program in the 2013 season.

Those seniors were honored prior to Thursday afternoon's Southwestern Conference game against Belleville East at Redbird Field. While the game didn't turn out the way

Alton would have liked – the Redbirds, on the strength of three Lancer home runs, dropped a 7-2 decision – what those seniors have contributed to the program won't soon be forgotten.

“I couldn't be prouder of (the 13 seniors being honored),” said **Redbird coach Todd Haug**. “It didn't exactly go their way tonight, but I'm proud of all of them. They're one of the most winningest classes in our school's history, they've been part of a lot and I couldn't be prouder of them.

“I talked with them (after the game), told them I loved them and told them we're right there with them. This isn't the end – we've got a few more games – but I wanted the community to see them, wanted to reward them for the efforts they've made. If you continue to play on, you're never going to have this again. You're going to know these people; you're never going to play again with someone you've known since kindergarten again. You're never going to have that sense of camaraderie.

“We'll replace them in terms of the physical body; we'll put someone else in that uniform, but it's going to be hard to replace the leadership, the camaraderie, the special memories. That's going to be difficult.”

Jacob St. Peters got the start for the Redbirds and managed to get himself out of a two-on, one-out jam in the top of the first when Patrick Gaul got a leadoff single and Drew Millas drew a walk with one out, but St. Peters struck out Jordan Yates looking and got Isaiah King to ground back to the box to get out of it. From that point, St. Peters and Lancer pitcher Cody Freppen hooked up in an old-school pitcher's duel, both hurlers getting the sides retired without much trouble to keep the game scoreless.

Alton mounted a threat in the bottom of the fourth when Aaron Bonnell managed to draw a two-out walk and went to third when Jacob Kanallakan singled to put runners at the corners, but Freppen struck out Seth Boeschert to end the threat. East finally broke the tie when Izaiah Hitt took a St. Peters offering deep to left and the ball barely cleared the fence for a home run to put the Lancers up 1-0. Alex Phillips then singled but was doubled off first when Kanallakan speared a shot off Jalen Jones' bat and tagged the base for a big double play. Gaul singled and stole second, but St. Peters struck out Trevor Sanchez to end the inning.

The Redbirds mounted another threat in the bottom of the fifth when, again with two out, Mike Hampton drew a walk and went to third on a Noah Rathgeb single, but Frappen struck out Steven Ngyuen to end the inning and keep East up 1-0. The Lancer lead expanded to 2-0 in the sixth when Millas homered to right, and that was followed

by a Yates single and a one-out Evan Lawrence single. Both stole bases and, with runners at second and third, Hitt drove both runners in with a single to seemingly break the game open at 4-0.

Rob Taul opened the bottom of the sixth a single and stole second, going to third when Bonnell singled to put runners at the corners. Kanallakan then grounded to short for an out, but Taul came in to score to cut the lead to 4-1. East scored three more times in the seventh, highlighted by a two-run homer from Yates that made it 7-1 in East's favor. The Redbirds scored once again in the bottom of the seventh, Derrick Allen scoring on a rundown, but the Redbirds could not get another threat going.

The Redbirds fell to 21-12 on the year, while the Lancers went to 24-10; Alton travels to Arthur Fletcher Field in Collinsville to close out the SWC and regular season at 4:30 p. m. today against the Kahoks.



