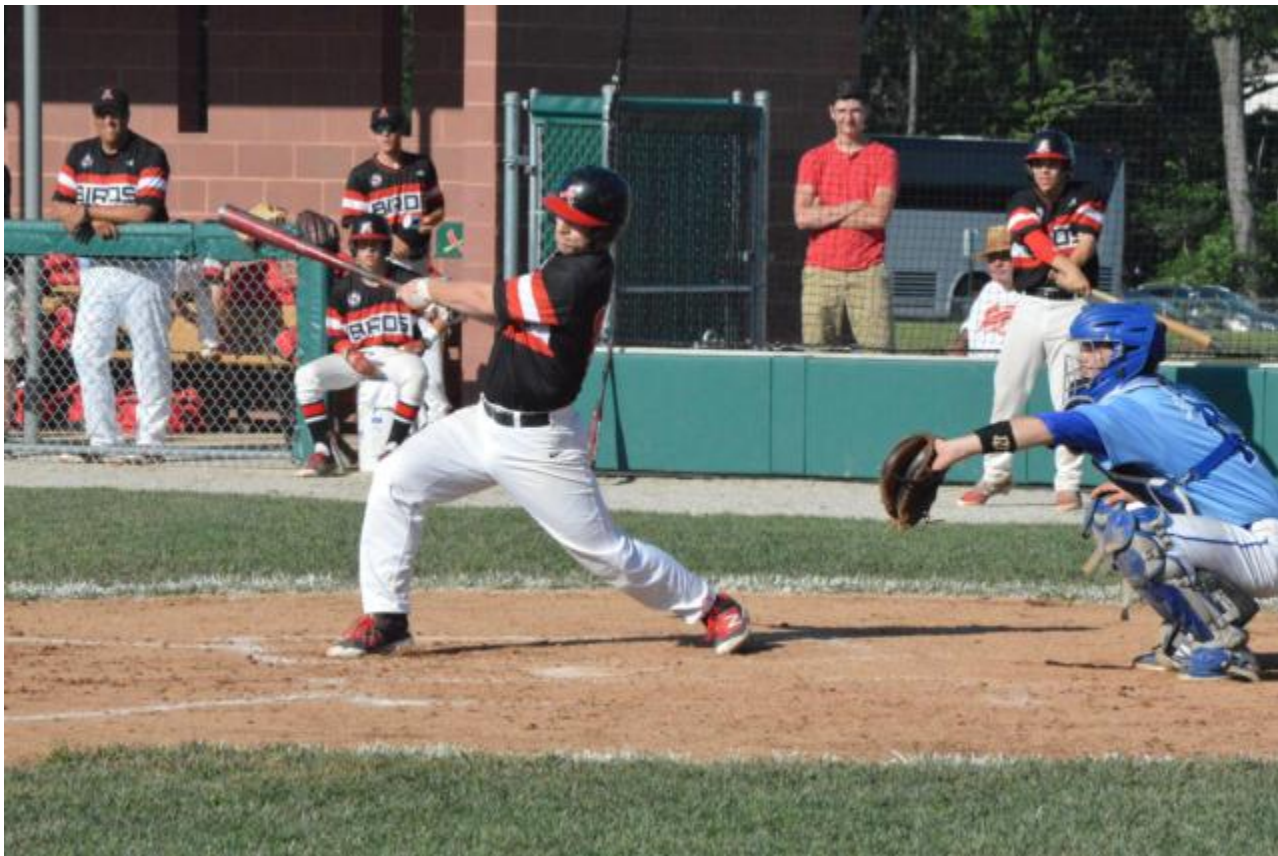


# Alton eliminates Quincy 3-1 in baseball regional

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer  
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**GODFREY** - “We preach to them this time of year, the keys to victory are, during a ball game, someone's got to make the big pitch, someone's got to make the big play, someone's got to get the big hit,” said **Alton baseball coach Todd Haug**.

And Alton got enough of those Thursday afternoon to eliminate Quincy 3-1 at Redbird Field in a semifinal contest of the IHSA Class 4A Alton Regional.

The win put the Redbirds (23-12) into Saturday's regional final against O'Fallon, who defeated Danville 5-4 Wednesday afternoon to get to the final; that game gets under way at 4 p.m., with the winner taking on Saturday's Belleville West Regional champ, either Edwardsville, Belleville West or Belleville East (the East-West game was suspended by darkness in the top of the 10<sup>th</sup> Thursday with the teams tied 5-5; it's scheduled to be resumed at 12:30 p.m. today) in Wednesday's Bloomington Sectional at Illinois Wesleyan University. The Blue Devils were eliminated at 16-13.

“On the pitching side of things,” Haug said, “with (Jacob) St. Peters able to work out (of a jam in the fourth after giving up a run) and not give up a second run and with (Devin Colley) able to come in in the fifth, sixth and seventh and do his thing and make a big pitch there (after a missed tag in the sixth) and we worked out way out of that too, so those are our big pitches.

“On the big-play side, we had a freshman (Rob Taul) go out and make a backhand play, makes a play with ease and gives (Steven Pattan) a good opportunity to turn a double play and that's as good a double play as you're going to see at the high school level – two guys with great hands.”

That run St. Peters gave up came in the top of the third when Derek Green stroked a one-out double to left and came around to score on the next batter when Masen Melton singled in Green. St. Peters got Alex Harbin to hit into a fielder's choice to erase Melton for the second out and got Hunter Wienhoff to ground back to the box to end the inning and keep the game 1-0.

Alton's first big hit came in the fourth when Steven Ngyuen opened with a single and stole second. Aaron Bonnell then got Blue Devil pitcher Drake Green to issue a walk to put runners at first and second; Jacob Kanallakan then walked to load the bases and bring up Pattan.

Pattan got ahold of a Green offering and drove it to the fence in left field, almost clearing the fence; Ngyuen and Bonnell came around to score, but Kanallakan was thrown out trying to get to third. Pattan came to second with a two-RBI double, though, to give the Redbirds a 2-1 lead.

“I was just looking first pitch on that one and he (Green) gave it to me,” Pattan said. “He got it up and luckily, I hit it a decent amount, hit it pretty far, not quite enough. I was looking for a strike early in the count and he'd been pounding the (strike) zone all day.”

Colley then came into the game in the fifth for St. Peters and kept the Blue Devils at bay in the fifth and sixth, making a big pitch in the sixth with runners at first and third to strike out Green and retire the side. When the Redbirds came to bat in the sixth, Taul opened with a single and, one out later, Kanallakan stepped to the plate and drove a 1-0 Green pitch deep to right-center field for a triple to score Taul and give Alton an big insurance run.

“We were talking about it before I came up,” Kanallakan said, “if Robbie got on, we were going to try to bunt him over and hopefully get that run home. That didn't work out; I came up and first pitch was a ball. (Haug) gave me the hit-and-run all I have to know is that I've got to swing at it, so if he gives me something to swing at, I've got to put a good swing at it; that's what I did.

“You know your job is to swing at it, so if he gives you a good pitch, you've got to get a good swing at it and let it go somewhere; that's what happened (on the triple).”



The Redbirds will be facing a formidable task against the Panthers; O'Fallon will be sending Bradley Harrison to the mound Saturday with the regional title on the line. Haug knows Alton is facing a huge task, but said “we're in a very, very unique and dangerous position; there's not a soul outside our circle of trust that is expecting us to win this ball game on Saturday.

“(Harrison) is a heck of a pitcher; he's one of the best ballplayers in the state of Illinois, pitcher or hitter. We've played him 14 innings and haven't got a runner to third base (against the SIU-Carbondale recruit). Outside of our circle of trust, I'm not sure if we're getting of notoriety on our chances...our unique position is – nobody's really expecting this and we have just enough talent to do it. That's a recipe for being very scary in the playoffs; no pressure and the talent to do it.”



