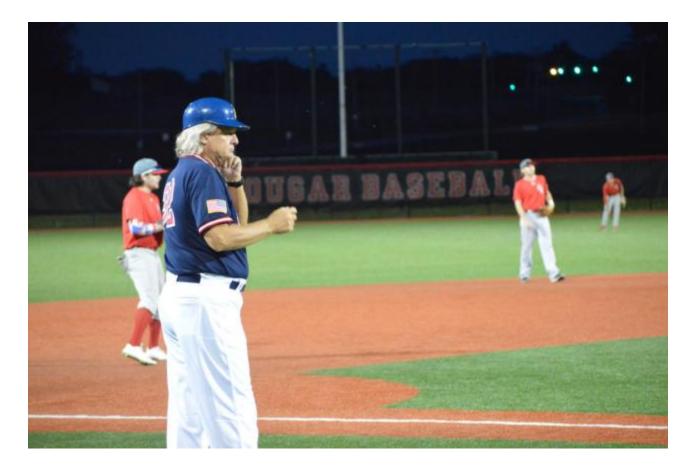# Metro East Bears appear set to have solid American Legion season

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – Last summer was quite a successful summer for the **Metro East Bears American Legion baseball team**, a team run jointly by the **Alton and Edwardsville American Legion** posts.

The Bears won the Illinois District 22 and Fifth Division tournaments but fell just short of winning the Illinois state championship after fighting their way through the loser's bracket of the event. The Bears then battled their way through the Legion Great Lakes

Regional tournament at Alton's Gordon Moore Park/Lloyd Hopkins Field, but fell just short of reaching the American Legion World Series in Shelby, N.C., falling to Midland, Mich., in the final.

The Bears recently started their season and will be playing this year at Roy Lee Field and at the new Redbird Field at Alton High School); some Bears games will also be played at Edwardsville's Hoppe Park this summer.

Bears manager Ken Schaake will be starting his 36th season at the helm of the team. "We may be a really solid team this year; we'll have some kids who will be making the jump into senior (Legion) ball this year, and that's a big jump," he said.

This year's state tournament, scheduled for Jerseyville July 27-29, following the District 22 playoffs July 12-15 and the Fifth Division Tournament July 18-21, will be a bit of an advantage for the Bears. "It'll be a lot closer this year," Schaake said; last year's state tournament was held in suburban Chicago. "But we've still got to win our way (to the state tournament); it's going to be a challenging task for them."

The Bears will once again host the Great Lakes Regional, this time at Roy Lee Field at SIUE, from Aug. 3-7; as host team, the Bears will automatically be in the field under Legion rules. The Legion World Series will again be in Shelby, N.C., in the western part of North Carolina, from Aug. 11-15.

For more information on the regional tournament, visit www.legionbb.com