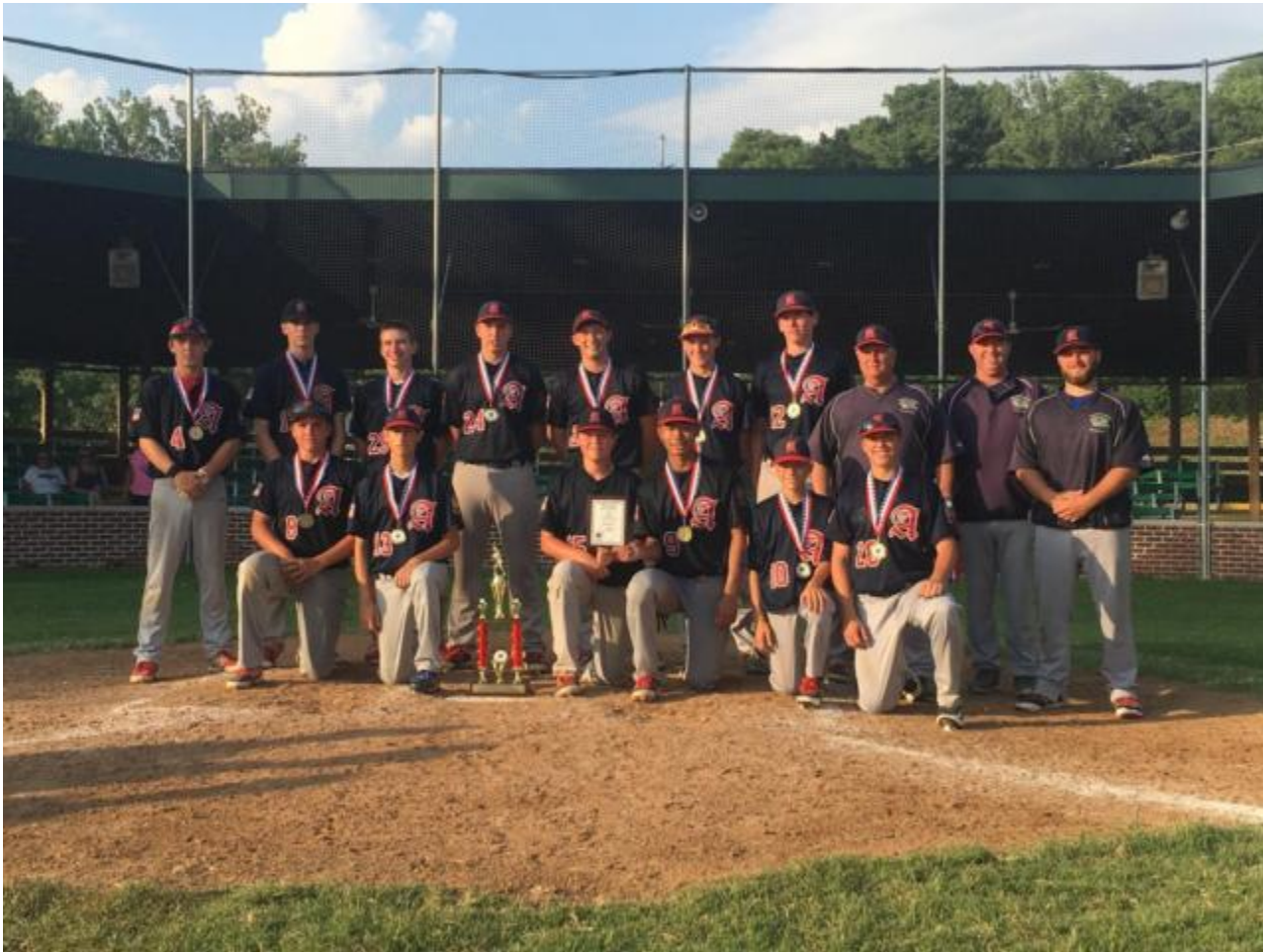




# **Alton Junior Legion Junior baseball team moves into Illinois Fifth Division Tourney**

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer  
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**ALTON** – Alton American Legion Post 126's Junior baseball team is going places this weekend.

Like to the deepest part of Southern Illinois – Metropolis – as Illinois District 22 champions as they take part in the Illinois junior Fifth Division Tournament, one of nine teams who will vie for three spots in the Illinois state tournament in Decatur next week.

The Junior Legionnaires won their way into the tournament by going 4-1 in the District 22 playoffs, defeating Valmeyer 4-1 in the final, thanks to an outstanding pitching performance from **Adam Stilts** and a four-hit performance, including three doubles, from **Simon Nguyen**, in the final; both Stilts and Nguyen were named tournament co-Most Valuable Players.

“It's a big achievement for the kids,” said **Alton manager Dennis Sharp**. “They've really, really grown in the last two-and-a-half weeks and they're developing into a really good baseball team.

“Some of the teams they beat had older players on there (junior teams may have players no older than 18 on their rosters); our kids are all 14 and 15 and they haven't yet played varsity baseball. It was a big feat for us to win it; we try to play the game the right way.”

Stilts is the ace of the pitching staff for Post 126. “He's really mature and he pitches well under pressure; he had to get out of a couple of jams (in the final), one when the bases were loaded and he got himself out of trouble.”

Post 126 will be going for their first Fifth Division crown since 2010, when they went up to the state tournament and won it all; they go into the tournament with the No. 1 seed.

The tournament was originally scheduled to have 10 teams, but Goreville – who Alton was slated to meet first – was unable to field a team for the weekend and was forced to withdraw. Alton will now meet West Frankfort at 4:45 p.m. Friday in their opening game of the double-elimination tournament, which runs through Monday.

**Here's the full schedule for the tournament:**

## **FRIDAY, JULY 22**

**Game 1:** Pickneyvilla vs. Valmeyer, 12:15 p.m.

**Game 2:** Steeleville vs. Olney, 2:30 p.m.

**Game 3:** West Frankfort vs. Aton, 4:45 p.m.

**Game 4:** Metropolis vs. Effingham, 7 p.m.

## **SATURDAY, JULY 23**

**Game 5:** Sparta vs. Pickneyville-Valmeyer winner 10 a.m.

**Game 6:** Game 1 loser vs. Game 2 loser, 12:15 p.m. (elimination game)

**Game 7:** Game 4 loser vs. Game 5 loser, 2:30 p.m. (elimination game)

**Game 8:** Game 6 winner vs Game 3 loser, 4:45 p.m. (elimination game)

**Game 9:** Game 2 winner vs. Game 3 winner, 7 p.m.

## **SUNDAY, JULY 24**

**Game 10:** Game 5 winner vs Game 4 winner, 12:15 p.m.

**Game 11:** Game 9 loser vs. Game 7 winner, 2:30 p.m. (elimination game)

**Game 12:** Game 10 loser vs. Game 8 winner, 4:45 p.m. (elimination game)

**Game 13:** Game 10 winner vs. Game 9 winner, 7 p.m.

## **MONDAY, JULY 25**

**Game 14:** Game 11 winner vs. Game 12 winner, Time TBD (Championship Game)