



Redbirds open season with big 11-1 win over Terriers in Kickoff Classic

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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SAUGET – Alton's baseball team got out of the gates in very good form Wednesday afternoon, taking advantage of several Carbondale miscues in the top of the fifth to score six times and going on to take an 11-1 win over the Terriers in the opening game of the 21-game, three-venue Prep Baseball Report Metro East Kickoff Classic showcase at GCS Ballpark in Sauget.

The win put the Redbirds at 1-0 on the year, while the Terriers fell to 0-1 on the newly opened season.

“Under the conditions (which were windy and cool Wednesday, with the wind blowing in), mid-March and everyone's happy to be playing some games out of the routine of playing practice games,” said **Redbird coach Todd Haug**, “we responded; we played well.”

Alton broke out their running game during the contest, which led to a couple of runs. “Today, with the wind conditions, the ball's not going anywhere; we identified something we could take advantage of,” Haug said. “We ran a little bit, we were aggressive when the time was right and it put us in good positions to get some runs.”



Alton's pitching excelled on the day; four pitchers – **Charlie Erler, Tyler Moxey, Alex Gates and Steven Pattan** – combined on a two-hitter. “We're a very, very young squad; 15 of 19 (on the Redbird roster) are underclassmen,” Haug said. “We work with them, we tell them to trust the system, we train them very disciplined-like in terms of the fundamentals and they responded today.”

“We have a lot of pitching, but it's a lot of green pitching; a lot of novice pitching. That being said, we want to get guys out there. We've got eight games until we start our (Southwestern) conference season. We want to know who our go-to guys are, we want to want to know what we call our 'compliments' – this guy after this guy – so it's important right now to not just say 'I'm going to ride this one horse all the way through.' We want to see a lot of guys out there, and we have to trust we've trained them and they'll respond. That's just part of the growing process.”

Alton opened the scoring in the fourth with a pair of runs thanks to a pair of Terrier errors and some pitching miscues that allowed runners to advance and a Ben Mossman RBI single that drove home a run; Alton then scored six times in the fifth, thanks to some good baserunning and Carbondale mistakes that cost the Terriers.

Carbondale's only run came in the bottom of the fourth when Skyler Peterman drove a pitch into the left-field corner for a double, then stole third and came home on a Zach Beckermann groundout to third. The Redbirds twice more in the sixth and once in the seventh for their final runs of the day.

Brandon Droste led Alton at the plate with a 3-for-5 day with two RBIs and three runs scored; Mikey Hampton, Mossman, Steven Nguyen, Simon Nguyen, Patten, Robbie Taul and Erler each had solo hits for Alton, with Hampton adding a RBI, Mossman a RBI and run scored, Simon Nguyen two RBIs and a run scored, Steven Nguyen two runs scored, Patten two runs scored, Taul a run scored and a RBI and Erler a run scored.

On the mound, Erler went three innings for the win, fanning four and walking two; Moxey went two innings giving up an earned run and two hits while striking out four, Gates an inning and striking out one and Patten an inning and fanning one.

The Redbirds host Murphysboro in an 11 a.m. Saturday doubleheader at Redbird Field, then meet Jersey at 4:30 p.m. Monday at home and the St. Louis Patriots in a 4:30 Tuesday home game.

