

# Redbirds come back in baseball twinbill to win second game 11-10, fall short in first contest

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer  
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ALTON – The late Joe Garigiola probably said it best.

“Baseball is a funny game.”

Saturday's doubleheader between Alton and MICDS of Ladue, Mo. may have been proof positive. Both games had their share of big innings, plays that didn't quite go as intended and in the end, a pair of high-scoring games that the Rams and Redbirds split, MICDS winning the opener 11-8 and Alton coming back from 7-0 down to take the nightcap 11-10 at Redbird Field. The split put Alton's record at 9-4 on the year while the Rams went to 2-5.

Needless to say, it was a pretty interesting day for both teams. “A lot of really weird baseball,” said Redbird coach Todd Haug. “We spotted them a lead in the second game, they spotted us a lead in the first game. Sometimes, you don't know how the wins come, but in this case, we're happy for this one.

“We'll take the (second game) win, but by no means does it take away from the sour grapes from the first game. By the same token, we need to be able to bounce back and we were down seven runs; we figured out a way to win. That's baseball.”

Haug knows the Redbirds still have work to do to get to where they want to be. “We've got a lot of work to do,” Haug said. “We've got a very young team; when I looked out there, we've got five sophomores, three juniors and a senior, so we're a very young team having to learn how to compete.

Alton got out to a 5-1 lead in the opener with a five-run first, highlighted by a Brandon Droste triple to right that brought home Steven Pattan and Ben Mossman and a Charlie Erler successful bunt that got Droste home to seemingly give Alton a good cushion. Alton added a run in the second, but the Rams got back to 6-4 in the fourth thanks in part to a two-run double from Harry Hegeman. The Redbirds countered with a pair of runs in the bottom of the fourth to stay ahead 8-4.

The Rams chipped away at the Redbirds, scoring solo runs in the fifth and sixth to get to 8-6 through six innings before MICDS put up five runs in the top of the seventh, highlighted by a bases-loaded single from Hegeman to pull the Rams to 8-7; they tied it on a fielder's choice before Andrew Krause took a pitch deep to left-center field over the fence for a three-run shot, putting MICDS up 11-8. Hegeman then retired the Redbirds to end the game, but not before the Redbirds threw a scare into the Rams when Adam Stilts got a two-out single to seemingly ignite Alton.

The Rams took a 1-0 lead through an inning of the nightcap, then exploded for seven runs in the top of the second, starting when Chase Fendelman sacrificed Ward Hanser and Will Vogel over; MICDS scored on a passed ball and a hit batsman before Luke Layton struck a bases-clearing triple to put the Rams up 6-0, coming home on a Mike Long single to give the Rams a seemingly insurmountable 7-0 lead.

It stayed that way until the bottom of the fifth, when the Redbirds scored four times to cut the lead to 7-4, getting a pair of runs on a hit batsman and a walk with the bases loaded; a fielder's choice and another bases-loaded walk brought in two more runs for Alton, who scored twice more in the sixth before MICDS seemingly put the game away with a three-run seventh after Hanser hit a bases-loaded triple.

Alton's seventh-inning rally started when Adam Stilts was hit by a pitch with the bases loaded to bring in Erler before Mossman scored when Robby Taul reached on an error to keep the bases loaded for the Redbirds. Two straight infield flies left Alton with one last chance, and Droste responded with a double that scored Breyon Reed, Stilts and Taul to win the game for Alton.

Droste was 1-for-4 in the opener with the triple and a run scored; Pattan was 2-for-3 with a RBI and run scored and Erler was 2-for-2 with a RBI; Cole Akal took the loss for Alton, going just a third of an inning and fanning one. Droste was 1-for-4 with the walkoff double in the nightcap with five RBIs for the game; Reed was 1-for-1 with a triple with two runs scored, one on a sixth-inning balk following the triple that pulled Alton close. Mossman was 1-for-2 with two runs scored and Stilts was 1-for-2 with a RBI and three runs scored.

The Redbirds head to GCS Ballpark in Sauget for a 6:30 p.m. Monday game against Carlyle before heading to Fletcher Field in Collinsville for 4:30 p.m. Tuesday Southwestern Conference clash with the Kahoks.