

Seven Alton juniors take part in victorious All-Star game

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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SAUGET – Like their senior counterparts, Illinois District 22 American Legion baseball players got the chance to represent their side of the Mississippi River Monday evening as part of the Gateway Border War Legion all-star games; the District 22 juniors scored an 11-4 win over the Missouri District 10 all-stars as a curtain-raiser to the senior all-star game at Sauget's GCS Ballpark.

Seven players from Alton Post 126 were on the Illinois team; they included Adam Stilts, Bryce Parrish, Cullen McBride, Griffin Bianco, Gage Booten, Ryan Best and David Otenbittle; players also represented Belleville, both Highland junior teams and Valmeyer in the game.

“it was a great game,” said Alton coach Doug Booten. “The Illinois side had a good night tonight; good competitors. Missouri had a good team too. It was a good way for the kids to show their skills; it was easy to pick out a lineup tonight – they're all good, they have a lot of skills.”

Booten was honored to have the chance to manage the Illinois team. “Dennis (Sharp) asked me a few days ago if I'd do this, and I told him I'd be glad to,” Booten said. “I really enjoyed it.

“I don't know if you could ask for anywhere else to play this (the home park of the Frontier League's Gateway Grizzlies). It's a beautiful place and it was a beautiful evening.”

Illinois broke out on top early with four runs in the bottom of the first of the seven-inning game; Alton's Bianco and Best scored two of the runs for the Illinois side. Bianco scored the fifth Illinois run in the second before Illinois brought home four more runs in the third to run out to a 9-0 lead.

Missouri broke the shutout in the fifth with a run and scored three more times in the sixth before Illinois scored in the sixth and seventh innings for the final margin of victory.

Valmeyer's juniors pays Alton a visit at 6 p.m. Wednesday at SIUE and East St. Louis' juniors taking on Alton at 6 p.m. Thursday at Alton High's Redbird Field before taking part in an Independence Day weekend tournament at Greenville beginning Friday and running through Monday, with Independence Day set aside as a rain date.

