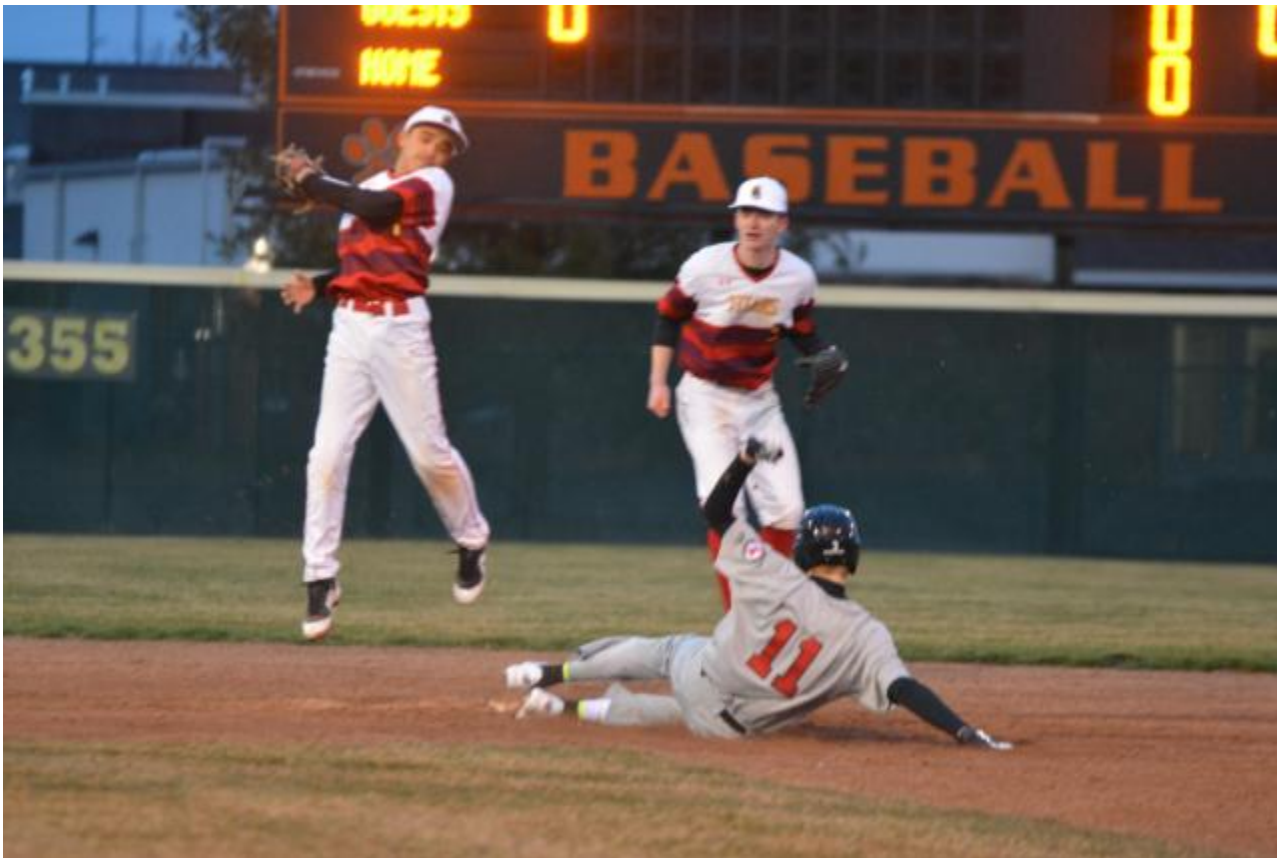


Alton baseball team blasts Tinley Park 20-0, Laaker tosses three solid innings

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – Alton High's baseball team scored three runs in the first, six in the second and 10 in the third, and also got three solid innings from pitcher Wesley Laaker as the Redbirds defeated Tinley Park 20-0 in a game shortened to three-and-a-half innings Friday night in a game of the Prep Baseball Report Metro-East Kickoff Classic at Edwardsville's Tom Pile Field.

Every player in the Alton line up scored at least once during the game as the Redbirds batted around in both the second and third innings in recording the win, played under cold and windy conditions.

“In coming out in some tough conditions,” said Alton head coach Todd Haug, “and yeah, anytime you're in a situation where you're jumping on them early, and getting a good pitching effort from Wesley Laaker, I mean, it was a good night all the way around for us, and again, some tough conditions. It was nasty, and we battled the cold and the rain.”

It was indeed a very bad night weatherwise, with some heavy rain that started shortly after the game was concluded. The Redbirds were able to swing the bats very effectively, and battled in each and every at-bat.

“One the things you don't see in a game like this, where you score this many runs and have quite a few hits, one of the things we did was, and what we've been working on, is battling with two strikes,” Haug said. “There were half a dozen times early on, where we had two strikes, and we fouled quite a few pitches off, and that's something we've been talking to them about. Battling, and having, even if it's an out, or productive out. So, we did that quite a few. Little things that probably don't show up in the box score, those are some things we're proud of tonight.”

The Redbirds hit the Titans for three runs in the first, getting a two-run single from Riley Phillips to score Charlie Erler and Jackson Brooks. Phillips later scored on an Adam Stilts ground out to first. In the second, the Redbirds sent 11 batters to the plate in scoring six runs on five hits. Erler, Brooks, Robby Taul, Phillips, Stilts and Laaker all had RBI singles in the inning. Alton also had its running game going well, stealing four bases to help its cause.

The big inning was the third, where the Redbirds sent up 16 men, scoring 10 times on five hits. Brooks scored twice in the inning, and every player in the line up scored once as Alton extended its lead to 19-0. After the first out, 13 consecutive batters reached base, the big blow being a Laaker single that drove in two runs. The Redbirds also benefited from two errors that allowed runs to score, and four walks. Alton scored its final run in the top of the fourth, an RBI single by Brooks that scored Ben Mossman.

Meanwhile, Laaker turned in a magnificent performance on the mound, only giving up a third-inning leadoff double to Mike Laib as only one of two base runners allowed. Laaker struck out five in the game, striking out the side in the second inning.

But it was the little things that helped Alton gain the win.

“Yeah, I mean, again, just compete on every pitch,” Haug said, “every at-bat, every inning, 21 hard outs. And tonight, we played well.”

The Redbirds play again on Monday afternoon at Jersey in a 4:30 p.m. start, then play their first two home games Tuesday against the St. Louis Patriots and Thursday against Southwestern. Both games commence at 4:30 p.m.





[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)