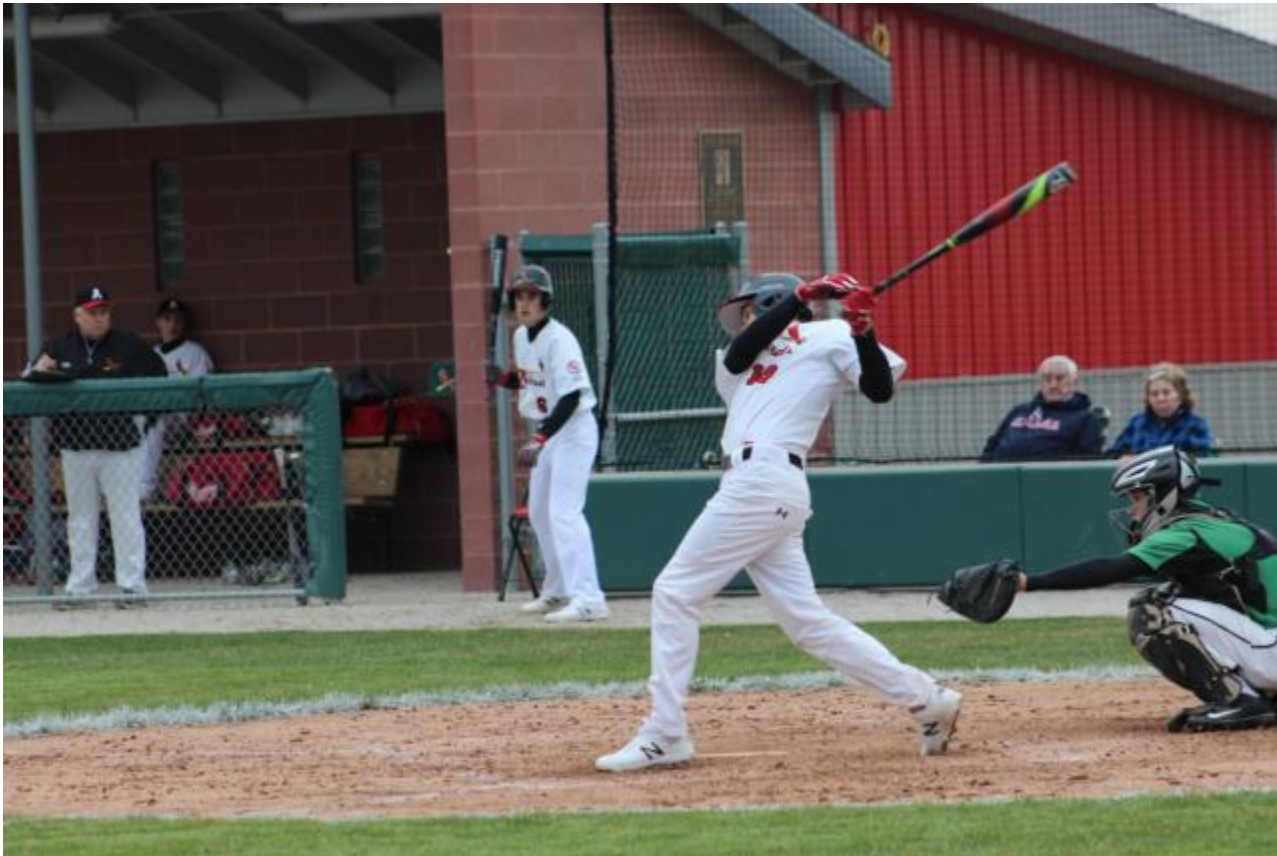
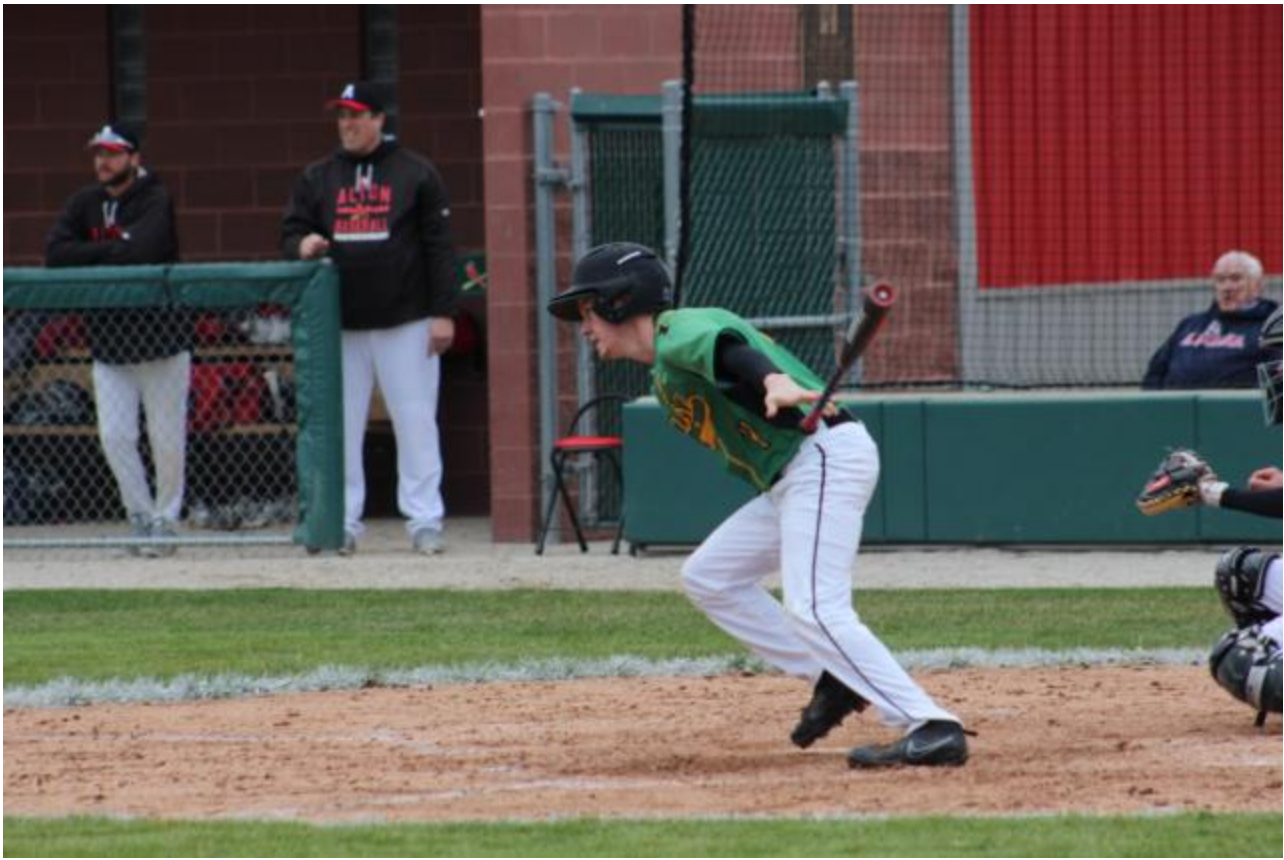


Redbirds slip past Southwestern 3-2; Haug wins 200th as Redbird coach

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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ALTON – Thursday afternoon's game between Piasa Southwestern and Alton turned into a tight game, one that wasn't decided until the finish.

In the end, Alton managed to push across a run in the bottom of the sixth, a run that turned out to be the difference as the Redbirds scored a 3-2 win over the Piasa Birds at Redbird Field. Alton improved to 3-1 on the year, while the Piasa Birds fell to 1-3.

The win was a milestone one for Alton coach Todd Haug, who won his 200th game as coach of the Redbirds since taking over the program in 2009.

“It just means I've been here long enough to get 200 wins,” Haug said with a smile. “It's been awhile.”

Haug was pleased with the Redbird performance Wednesday. “These boys came out and played well against a very, very impressive Southwestern team; they are a very quality small school and coach (Brian) Hanslow going to have a good squad this year.”

Robby Taul got the ball for Alton and threw six good innings, conceding a run on three hits while striking out four. “He struggled to get ahead (on the count) a little early, but

overall, very, very solid performance,” Haug said. “He pitched six strong innings for us, and anytime you can get us through six and we've got the lead, tip your cap to the starting pitcher.

“Their pitcher (Ben Lowis) was solid; again, timely hitting and playing good defense, that spells a recipe for success.”

“it was a great game,” Hanslow said. “Our pitcher, Ben Lowis, threw a great game and their pitcher, Robby Taul, threw a great game; 93 and 91 pitches, they matched each other. We just didn't get hits put together; we scratched one (out) there in the sixth inning and we had a chance there in the end; we got some guys on base and made it close.

“We can't fault our effort; we put the ball in play today, we didn't strike out, so I was really happy with that compared to our effort the last couple of games. They're a good team and we're going to take a lot of positives from today.”

Southwestern had a chance in the second to score, getting runners on the corners with two out, but Taul managed to get out of the jam to keep things scoreless. Alton scored the first runs of the game in the fourth when Taul led off with a triple to right-center field and, with one out, came home on an Adam Stilts RBI single to go to a 1-0 lead. Stilts himself scored when he was sacrificed to second by Simon Ngyuen and came home on a Wesley Laaker single to make it 2-0 in Alton's favor.

The Redbirds got a solo run in the third when Charlie Erler singled to open the inning, went to second on an errant pickoff throw and reached third on a wild pitch before Jackson Booker singled Erler home to make it 3-0 for the Redbirds. Southwestern got one run back in the sixth when Jack Little reached on an error and came around to score on a Luke Gollike single to cut the lead to 3-1.

Laaker came in to pitch for Alton in the seventh and retired the first batter he faced before Chase Stahl was hit by a pitch and went to second on wild pitch; Luke Simmons then singled Stahl to third and came home on a sacrifice fly by Dakotah Corby. After the throw to get Stahl was caught by Owen Stendeback, Simmons tried to go to second, but Stendeback fired to Erler, playing second; Erler applied the tag to Simmons to end the game.

Taul went 1-for-2 on the day with the triple and a run scored; Ben Mossman was 1-for-2 with a double, Laaker 1-for-2 with a RBI, Erler 1-for-2 with a run scored, Stilts 1-for-1 with a RBI and run scored and Ngyuen 1-for-2; Taul got the win for the Redbirds.

Eddie Bolin was 1-for-3 for Piasa, Ryne Hanslow 1-for-3, Simmons 2-for-3 and Little and Issac Marshall a run scored each. Alton next meets up with Jersey at 4:30 p.m. today at Ken Schell Field, then meets Civic Memorial at 11 a.m. Saturday in Bethalto for a single game; the Piasa Birds head to Collinsville for a 4:30 p.m. game today, then visits Auburn for a 4:30 p.m. Monday contest.

[Steven Spencer also contributed to this story.](#)