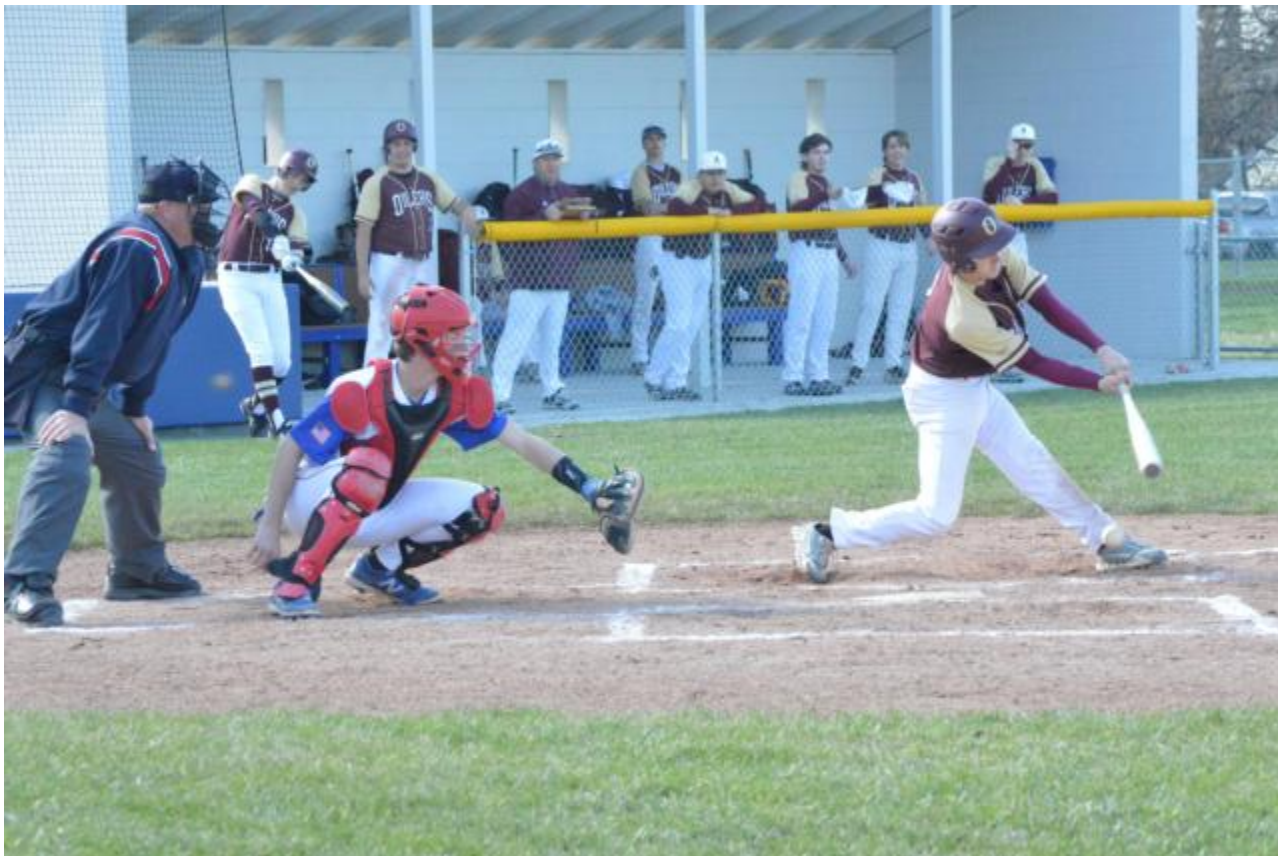
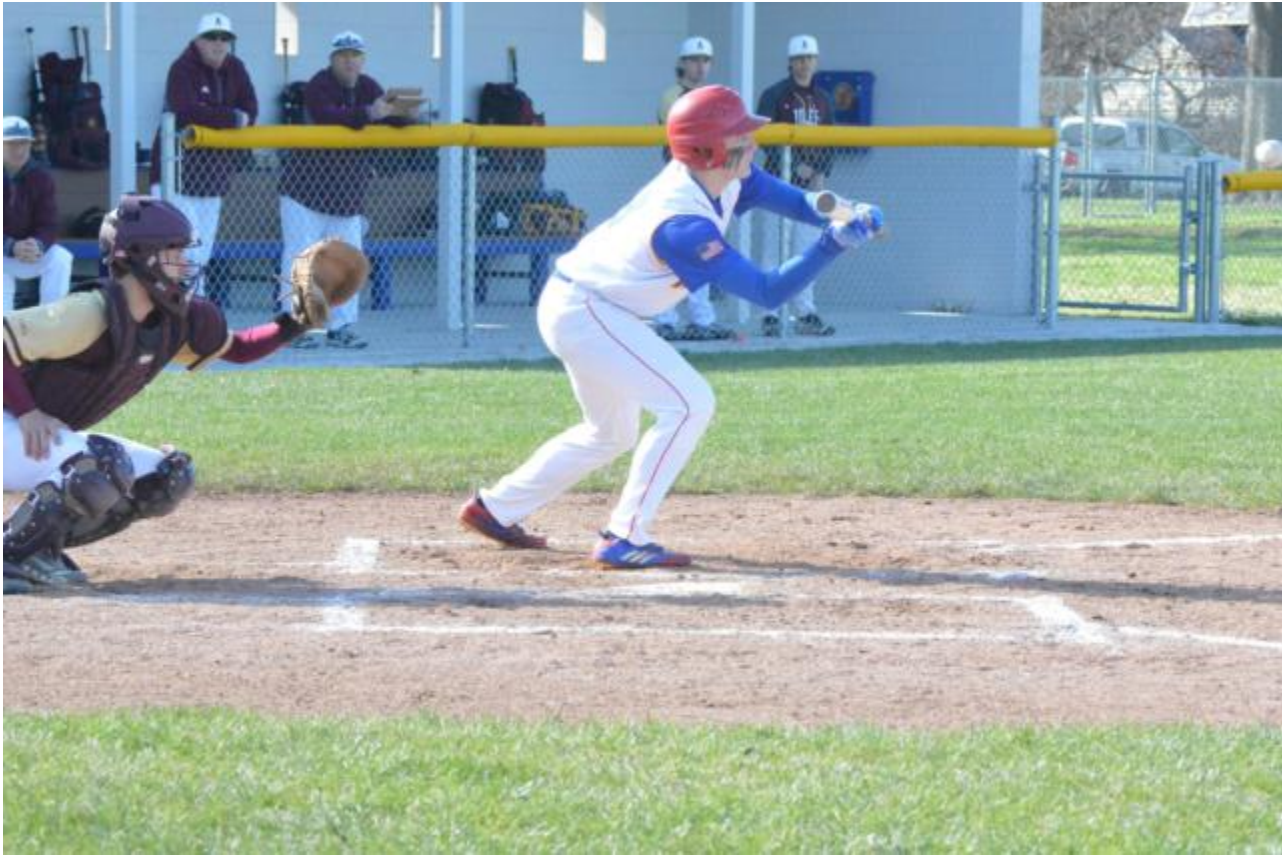
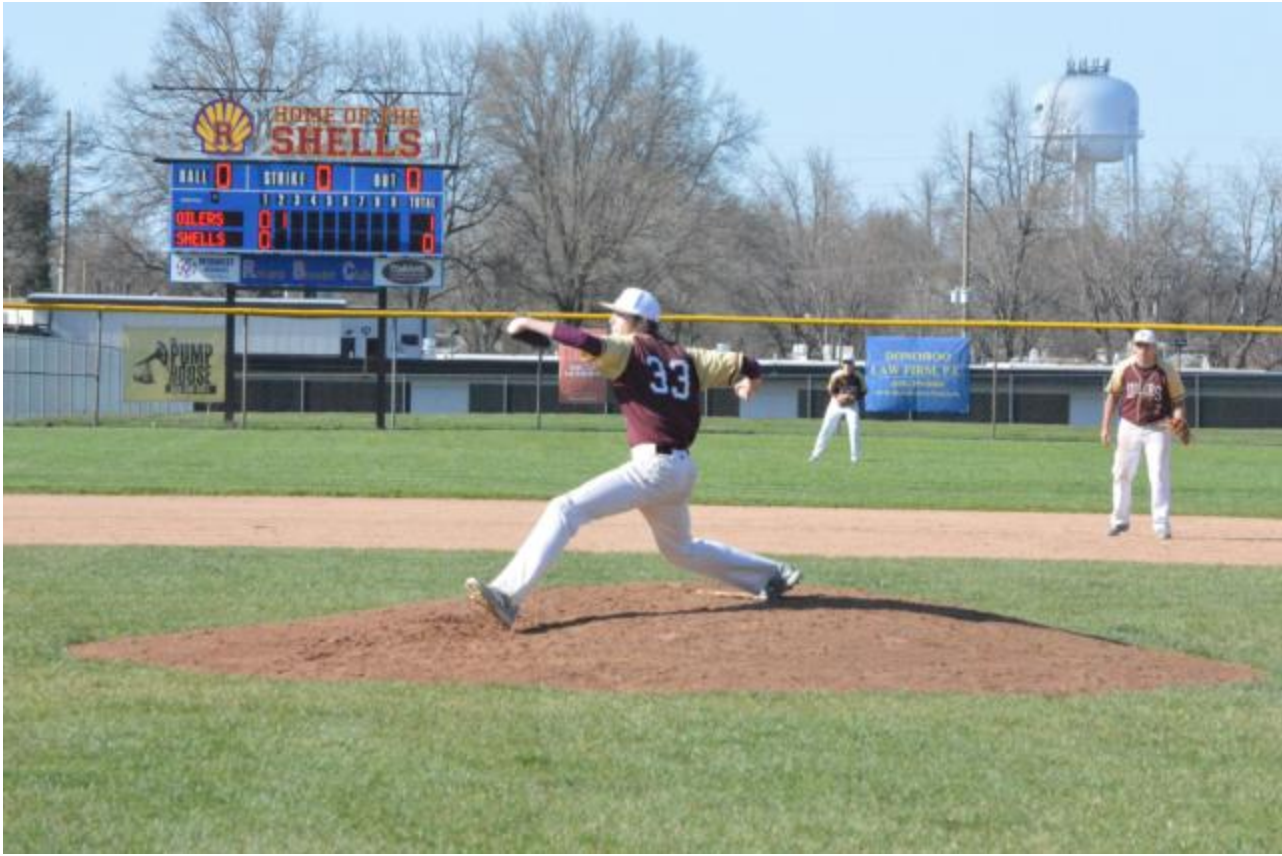


Oiler bats too much for Shells in battle of backyard rivals

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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ROXANA – Thursday was a big day for Roxana's baseball program.

The long-awaited ribbon-cutting ceremony for the renovated Shell baseball grounds took place prior to the start of the game against backyard rival East Alton-Wood River.

The game itself was a typical game between the two rivals – close, hard-fought and not decided until the end, when the Oilers got three runs in the sixth to take the lead and come away with a 4-2 win over the Shells; EAWR improved to 6-6-1 on the season while the Shells dropped to 2-8.

“It's a big win,” said Oiler coach Kyle Duncan. “Obviously, it's a big day for Roxana and it's a real nice ballpark; they've done great things with it; our kids were pumped up and ready to play. We didn't do a lot early in the game, but we got that one run but then we had that big inning and our pitching held throughout the rest of the game.

“The three runs were big for us and it's great to get back on a win streak.”

The Oilers, like most other area teams, have been affected by the bad weather that's marked the biggest part of the spring season so far. “We've responded (to the weather problems) pretty well,” Duncan said. “We've had eight rainouts this year and then we went to Kentucky and had two down there (last weekend), so it's been a little rough.

“We've bounced back this week, got two games in. Once it gets a little warmer, we'll be all right.”

While the outcome of the game wasn't what Shell coach Scott Harper would have liked, he was happy with how his team competed against their rivals. “It was a much better game,” Harper said. “The two games we've played on it (before Thursday's game) were awfully bad for us, so we were able to compete; that's what I told the guys today. I told the guys, obviously, today it's the natural rivalry with Wood River and everything too, but as you're putting things together, just come out and compete and play the game.

“Good pitching from Gavin (Huffman, who went 5.2 innings for RHS); we kicked a couple behind him and made some baserunning errors, so those things kind of stand out on why we came up short today, but I'll take this every day of the week.”

The Oilers broke out on top first in the second when Hunter Hall led off with a double and quickly came home on a RBI single from Luke Westbrook to get EAWR ahead 1-0; the Shells responded in the bottom of the third when Brayden Davis led off by reaching on an error and went to second on a Huffman single. One out later, Davis scored from a Christian Bertolotti double to tie the game before the Shells went ahead on a Logan Presley RBI single that brought in Huffman and gave Roxana a 2-1 lead.

It stayed that way until the top of the sixth when Hall reached on an error to start the inning and moved up on a Westbrook single; Jared Liley then singled in Hall to tie the game at 2-2; Ashton Murray got the bases loaded after he was hit on a two-out pitch to bring up Gage Booten, who stroked a single to drive in Westbrook and Liley to give the Oilers a 4-2 lead that held up to give EAWR the win.

Booten went 2-for-4 with the game-winning RBIs for the Oilers, with Tyler Hamby 1-for-3, Hall 1-for-4 with a double and run scored, Westbrook 2-for-4 with an RBI and run scored, Liley 3-for-3 with an RBI and run scored and Zack Wells 1-for-3; Bertolotti went 2-for-4 for the Shells with two doubles and an RBI, Presley 2-for-4 with an RBI, Jacob Acker 1-for-4, Davis 1-for-3 with a run scored and Huffman 1-for-1 with a run scored.

The Shells travel to Greenville College for a 4:30 p.m. game today against Greenville, then host Carlinville at 4:30 p.m. Monday; the Oilers head to Gordon Moore Park/Lloyd Hopkins Field for a 4:30 p.m. Monday game against Marquette Catholic before hosting Jersey at 4:30 p.m. Tuesday.

