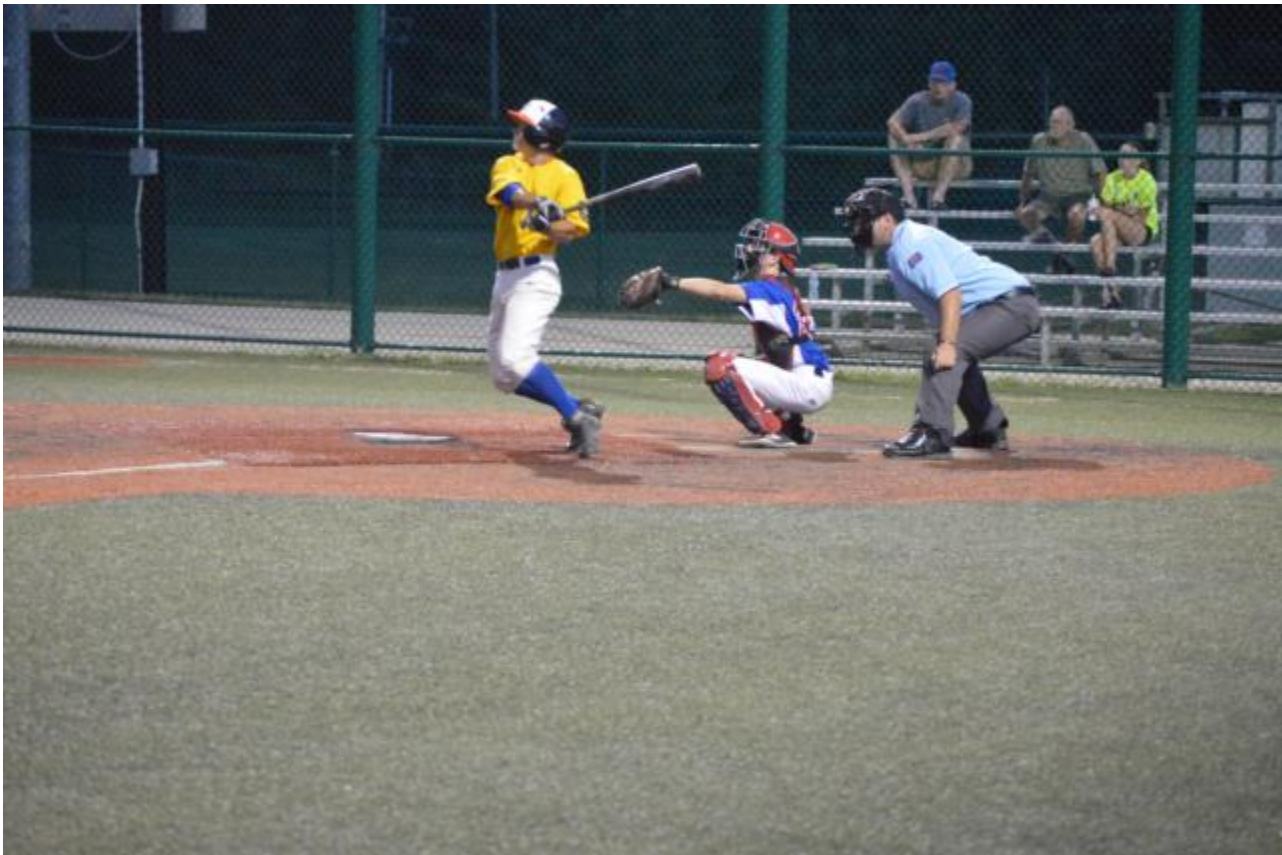
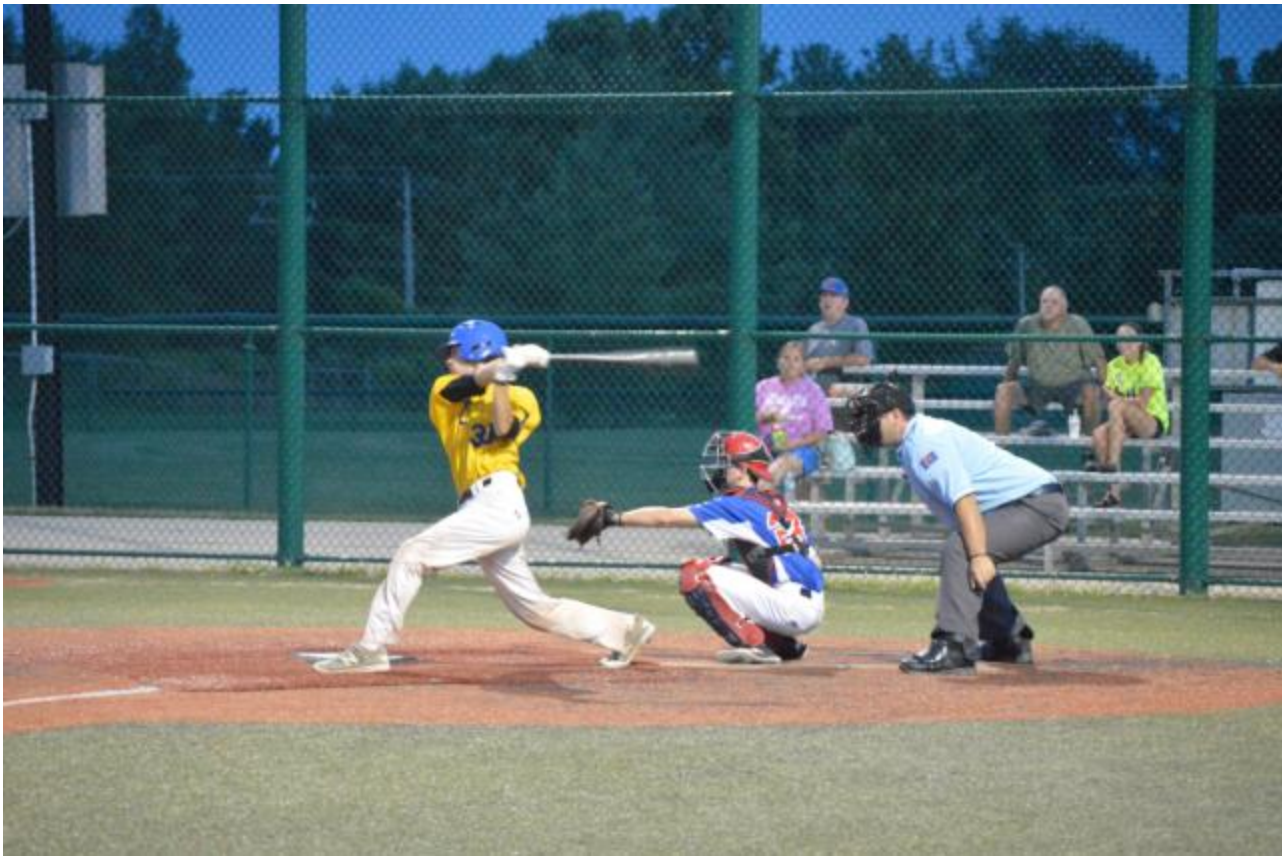




Edwardsville American Legion team crushes Belleville West in doubleheader

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – Edwardsville American Legion Post 199's baseball team went into Thursday's Illinois District 22 doubleheader against Belleville Post 58's Hilgards on a three-game slide.

"I felt the Sunday first game (against Jefferson City in the Firecracker Classic tournament in Jerseyville) and the Tuesday game (against Salem) were games they felt they should have won," said Post 199 manager Ken Schaake. "They came out flat after the Jeff City game with Elgin (in the Firecracker tournament) for a couple of innings and it hurt them."

The Legionnaires had all the answers, however, in their twin bill, getting out to an 8-1 lead after two innings in the opener and then a 7-1 lead through three innings of the nightcap en route to a sweep of the Hilgards at Edwardsville High's turf field Thursday night, Post 199 taking a 11-1, six-inning win in the first game and a 12-1, five-inning win in the second game to take their record to 18-5 overall, 9-1 in District 22.

"These guys know they're good ballplayers, but they also know you've got to come out ready to play every day and from the very beginning," Schaake said. "You can't wait until halfway through the game on teams; that was the thing we tried to get through to them after Sunday's game and also the Tuesday game."

Game 1 opened with the Hilgards getting three straight hits off Zach Seavers to load the bases; Seavers responded by getting the next three Hilgards out in while conceding a run, but Edwardsville responded by putting together a three-run bottom of the first, Chase Gockel putting the first run home on a sacrifice fly to bring home Tate Wargo to tie the game at 1-1; from that point, it was all Edwardsville as Joel Quirin chased home Will Messer and Alex Schreiber to put Edwardsville up 3-1, Post 199 never looking back.

Seavers settled down after that beginning and let just one runner reach third the remainder of the game only after the issue had long been decided. Edwardsville scored five more times in the bottom of the second, highlighted by two-RBI single from Schreiber that chased home Gockel and Messer that pushed the lead to 7-1 at the time; a Schreiber double in the fourth scored Messer while RBI hits from Reid Hendrickson and Nick Yates scored the final two runs in the bottom of the sixth to end the game.

The nightcap, for which Belleville was the home team, saw Edwardsville storm out to a 7-0 lead thanks to a six-run top of the second, the big blow a two-run double from Hendrickson, who got the ball for the game, that brought in Schreiber and Quirin. A five-run fifth brought Game 2 to an early end, highlighted by two-run Schreiber triple that scored Mikey Hampton and Messer while the eventual game-ending runs were scored by Schreiber and Quirin.

Seavers conceded nine hits and one run to Belleville in the opener while striking out five while Hendrickson gave up a run on three hits while dismissing seven by strikeout in the nightcap. “To come out against a Belleville team and win two times like they did today and get the pitching performances that we did – especially from Reid in the second game,” Schaake said. “Zach struggled a little bit but didn’t walk anybody – hit three, but didn’t walk anybody – when the pressure was on, he was up to the task.”

“It was a tough night for us; we got off to a bad start with walks in the first game and never quite recovered,” said Hilgards manager Greg Eschman, “and that kid who threw the second game for Edwardsville (Hendrickson), you’ve got to tip your cap to him; he threw the ball well.

“They hit the ball in the third inning of the second game; that’s the way it goes. We came out and battled, but we came out on the short end.”

In the opener, Wargo was 1-for-3 with an RBI and two runs scored for Post 199, with Goeckel an RBI and run scored, Messer four runs scored with an RBI, Schreiber 2-for-2 with three RBIs and three runs scored, Quirin 1-for-1 with two RBIs, Hendrickson 2-for-2 with two RBIs, Yates 2-for-4 with an RBI and Konnar Loewen a run scored.

In the nightcap, Wargo was 1-for-3 with a RBI and run scored, Hampton 2-for-3 with two runs scored, Goeckel 1-for-3 with a double and RBI, Messer two runs scored, Schreiber 3-for-3 with two RBIs and two runs scored, Quirin 1-for-1 with three runs scored, Hendrickson 2-for-3 with a double, two RBIs and a run scored, Yates 2-for-3 with two RBIs and a run scored and Loewen an RBI.

Edwardsville head to New Athens for a 6 p.m. road game tonight before meeting up with Lincoln Post 263 at noon Saturday and Harrisburg Post 167 at noon Sunday, both games at Redbird Field in Alton; Alton Post 126 will meet both teams at 3 p.m both Saturday and Sunday following Edwardsville’s games.

