

Alton to host American Legion State Baseball Tournament

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ALTON - Amateur sports fans can witness Illinois' top talent on display in the American Legion's community baseball programs firsthand, as the Alton, Illinois Post 126 hosts the American Legion's Illinois Junior District Tournament - July 20, 21, 22, 23, and the Senior Illinois State Baseball Championship – July 28, 29, 30, 31 at Alton High School's new sports complex.



The winner of the Illinois State Tournament will join the winners from Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Ohio to compete for a trip to the American Legion World Series (ALWS) in Shelby, NC.

“This tournament puts our community and our program on a regional stage,” Dennis Sharp, Alton Post 126 General Manager and Tournament Director explained. “It’s

affordable, sure at \$5 per person per game or \$10 per person per day for 3 games of top-notch competition. But let's not forget this opportunity; we want to pay tribute to our service men and women, the game, and display the character of our community by showing our guests the best hospitality anywhere."

The American Legion has had a considerable social impact throughout America, having won hundreds of benefits for veterans and produced many important community programs for children and youth. MLB professionals like Don Mattingly, Albert Pujols, Alex Gordon, and retired Cardinal pitcher, Chris Carpenter will tell you about the Legion's impact on their lives.

"I tell the players regularly that the reason we're here today may be baseball, but never forget the men and women serving in our Armed Forces that earned our freedom to play baseball," General Manager Sharp noted.

All games are played at Alton High School - 4200 Humbert Rd., Alton. The tournament opens with the first game on Saturday, July 28, at 11 a.m. with a formal Opening Ceremony prior to the game. The Opening Ceremony will pay tribute to the American Legion, active military personnel, veterans, local law enforcement and emergency responders. Game times are 11 a.m., 2 p.m., and 5 p.m. Saturday, Sunday, and Monday with the Championship scheduled for Tuesday at 1 p.m.

Preceding the tournament on Friday, July 27, players, coaches, and sponsors will be treated to an evening of celebration at a Tournament Banquet and a fundraiser, open to the public, featuring live - "The Hot Stove with Ken Reitz". All proceeds will cover tourney costs and help with expenses for the 2018 State Tournament, also being hosted



by Post 126.

Reitz was nicknamed "Zamboni" for his skill of scooping up hot shots on the artificial turf at Busch Memorial Stadium. In 1973, he replaced Joe Torre as the Cardinals' starting third baseman. In both 1973 and 1974, he led all National League third basemen

in fielding percentage. In 1975 he won a Gold Glove Award at the position, breaking Doug Rader's streak of five consecutive Gold Gloves. In 1977 he set a National League record - only committing nine errors.

Sharp also pointed out that, “One team will emerge as the Illinois State Champion and move on to the Great Lakes Regional in Napoleon, Ohio. More than 180 players, coaches, umpires, and Legion staff will spend part of their vacation in Alton, Illinois, for what may be a once-in-a-lifetime experience.”

Tickets are \$20 per person in advance and \$25 at the door. Doors open at 6:30 with the program beginning at 7:00.

For tickets or more information contact: Dennis Sharp, (618) 920-8938 or Nick Paulda, 618-604-8209, or post126baseball@yahoo.com. [Print the flier at www.LegionBB.com](http://www.LegionBB.com) and bring it to the gate for your discount.