

Mayor, New Owner Announce New Prospect Baseball League Team to Start in 2021

by Chris Rhodes, Reporter
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ALTON - The City of Alton and new owner/operator Steve Marso announced today that an expansion Prospect Baseball League Team will be coming to Alton. The new team will play its games at Hopkins Field at Gordon Moore Park and will begin to play in 2021.

Alton Mayor Brant Walker said this league will offer highly competitive and quality baseball.

"This is incredible, we very excited about it," Walker said. "This will be great for the family and a reasonable night out for quality entertainment. Some of the players you see in Alton you will see one day on TV in the Major Leagues."

Marso said he is excited about the potential in Alton.

"My family and I are grateful and blessed to be given the opportunity to make Alton a standout member of such a prestigious organization as the Prospect League," Marso said. "We have long hoped that the opportunity might come along to fulfill that dream and get back in the saddle of operating a club team in such a receptive and amazing area as Alton."

Several additions are being discussed for Lloyd Hopkins Field before the 2021 season.

"I personally was blown away upon my first visit to Gordon Moore with the amazing new additions and facilities that have been added there as well as the remarkable upkeep of the park staff maintains, said Prospect League Commissioner Dennis Basten. "What a magnificent jewel that park is for everyone in the region."

Commissioner Basten said after several visits and meetings, they knew Alton was an ideal fit for the league.

"We applaud the efforts of Mayor Brant Walker and Parks and Recreation Director Michael Haynes in their understanding and potential that the Prospect League brings to this remarkable city. We are proud of the relationship that has already been established and look forward to many upcoming summers of the highest level of summer collegiate baseball that the Prospect League has to offer. We look forward to Opening Day 2021, in Late May, when the Alton franchise takes the field with our other newest team in 2020 in O'Fallon, MO. Alton will have a great rival across the river."

Alton Director of Planning and Economic Development Greg Caffey echoed everyone else's excitement about the new Prospect League team.

"The City of Alton is extremely pleased to welcome the Prospect League to Gordon Moore Park and the greater Alton community," he said. "The expansion of both active and passive recreational opportunities are a central component of our tourism and economic development strategies. We invite baseball fans throughout the region to view the future stars of tomorrow displaying their talents at Hopkins Field."

Walker estimated there are roughly 100 baseball players who played in the Prospect League now in Major League Baseball. He said many of the players will be Division I baseball stars.

"How exciting it is to have such an asset coming to our community," said Mayor Walker.

Alton Parks and Recreation Director Michael Haynes said Lloyd Hopkins Field is such an incredible asset for the community and this will just add to its ambiance.

"The city has put a lot of time and resources into bringing it back to life over the last few years," Haynes said. "We are so excited to see that work paying off with the increased activity in the park and now the addition of an expansion team in the Prospect League. We look forward to the continued upgrades at the park in partnership with our new Prospect League organization."

The Prospect League schedule is 60 games at it begins at the end of May and ends the second week of August. The Prospect League is a summer collegiate wood bat league.

The purpose of the league is to provide a summer baseball program for eligible college players to give them experience using a wood bat in a competitive atmosphere. It also provides a venue to allow Major League Baseball scouts to watch collegiate prospects using wood bats against living pitching in competition.

There will be a naming contest for the Prospect League team with school and community participation.

The present Prospect League Teams are:

Cape Catfish, Cape Girardeau, MO.

Champion City Kings, Springfield, OH.

Chillicothe Paints, Chillicothe, OH.

Danville Dems, Danville, IL.

Dupage Pistol Shrimp, Naperville, IL.

Lafayette Aviators, Lafayette, IN.

Normal Cornbelters, Normal, IL.

O'Fallon Hoots, O'Fallon, MO.

Quincy Gems, Quincy, IL.

Springfield Sliders, Springfield, IL.

Terre Haute Rex, Terre Haute, IN.

West Virginia Miners, Beckley WV.

The Prospect League plays in two divisions, East and West.

In 2020, an All-Star Scout Showcase will be held in six cities the same night. The post-season schedule has the winners of each half of each division playing a one-game divisional championship, followed by a best of three championship series.

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