

Alton Post 126 Legion Team Wins 2: Cullen McBride Has 3 Hits, Strikes Out 4 on Mound, Also Has Hit In Second Game

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RHINELAND, Mo. - Cullen McBride had three hits and struck out four pitching the first game, while three different players had two hits, and Kenny Beachum drove home three runs as Alton Post 126's senior American Legion baseball team swept a doubleheader at Rhineland, Mo., 6-2 and 11-3 Saturday afternoon.

The wins are the first two on the season for the Legionnaires after dropping their first two games of the 2020 season last weekend at Washington, Mo. And everything was clicking on all cylinders for Alton on the day.

"Everything went great," said Post 126 manager Doug Booten. "Pitching, defense, hitting. Everything."

McBride only allowed five hits and walked none in five innings of work, helping Alton to the win in the first game, and in the second, both John Durrwachter and Tyler Steward pitched well, while the Legionnaires pounded out 12 hits and took advantage of four walks issued by Rhineland pitching in the nightcap.

"Our pitching wasn't quite as good in the second game as the first," Booten said. "But they walked a few, we got some hits, and we were able to capitalize on that."

It was especially important in the second game, as right field at the Rhineland park was a very bad sun field.

"We took advantage of their mistakes," Booten said, "and it was a very difficult sun field in right as well."

In the first game, the Legionnaires jumped out to a 3-0 lead with two runs in the second and another in the third before Rhineland rallied in the fourth with two in the home half. But Alton got two more runs in the sixth and another in the seventh to clinch the game.

McBride was three-for-four with an RBI in the first game, while Preston Schepers was two-for-four with two RBIs. Adam Stilts and Ryne Hanslow each had a hit and RBI, while Steward also hit safely and Caleb Noble drove home a run. McBride had his outstanding performance on the mound, while Hanslow pitched the final two innings, allowing only a hit to preserve the win.

In the second game, the Legionnaires jumped out of the game quickly with a six-run first inning, adding four more in the third to make the score 10-1. Rhineland scored once in the first and two more times in the fourth, but Alton scored another run in the fifth to take the 11-3 win.

Caden Shearlock, Owen Macias and Durrwachter all had two hits in the game for the Legionnaires, while Noble, McBride, Blaine Lancaster, Beachum, Bryce Higginbotham and Nick Rayfield all hit safely. Beachum led the attack with his three RBIs in the game, while Noble and McBride both drove home two runs and Higginbotham brought home the other run. Durrwachter fanned five Rhineland batters in three-and-a-third innings of work, while Steward struck out four more in relief to gain the doubleheader sweep.

"They've come a long way from last weekend," Booten said, "and we looked so much better today. Cullen pitched well in the first game, Ryne came in relief and pitched well, John went three-and-a-third, Tyler followed up, and both pitched well."

The Legionnaires evened their record at 2-2 on the season, and will play again in a tournament hosted by Washington in Elsberry, Mo., starting on Thursday against Elsberry in a 6 p.m. start, then play on Saturday against the hosts at 10 a.m., and against Manchester, Mo. at 7 p.m. The semifinals and finals are set for Sunday in Washington.

"Let's hope we keep this train a-runnin'," Booten said with a laugh.