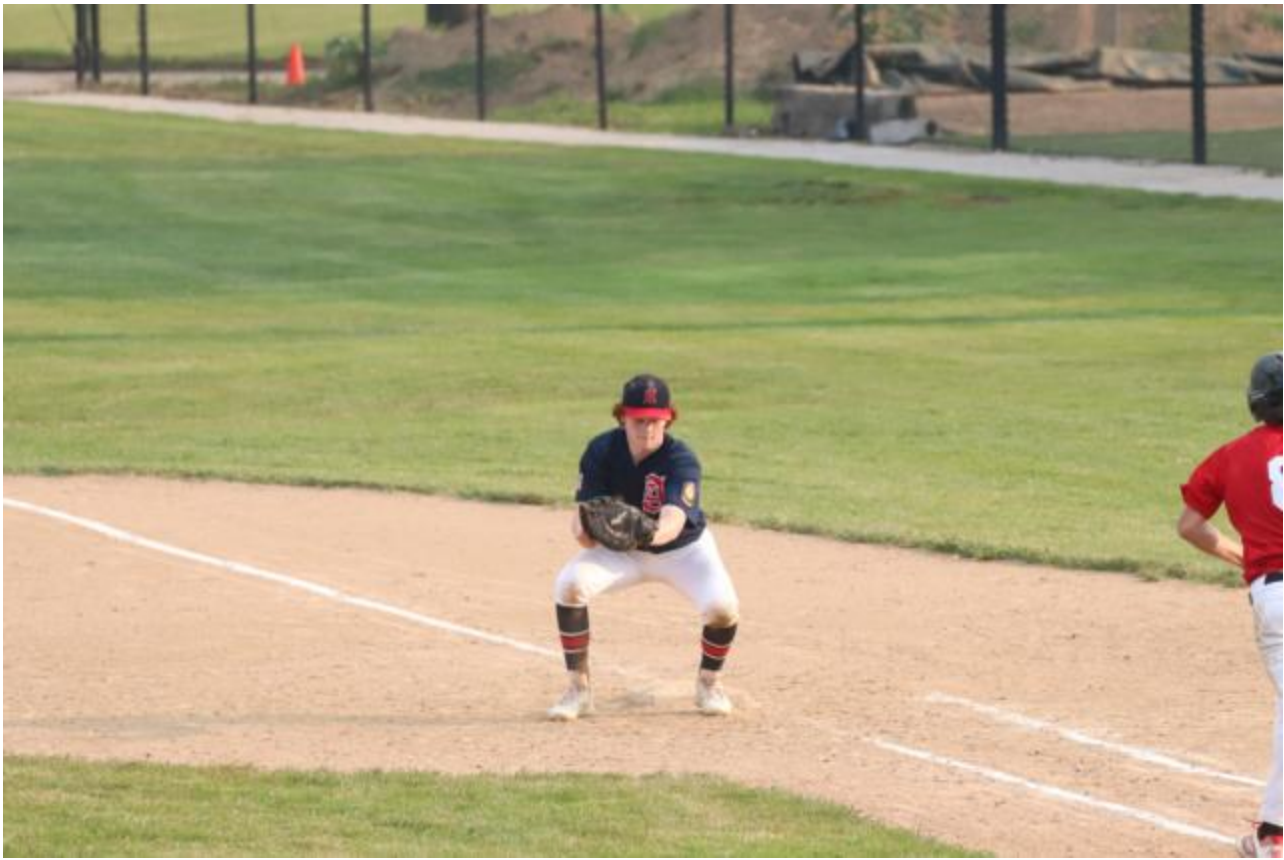


Alton Post 126 Juniors Play Well, Get Boost From Bullpen In Doubleheader Loss To Experienced Highland Team

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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ALTON - The Alton Post 126 junior American Legion baseball team played very well and got a big boost from their bullpen in both ends of a doubleheader, but in the end, lost twice to Highland 7-3 and 7-2 in a twinbill played Tuesday night at Lloyd Hopkins Field at Gordon Moore Park.

The junior Legionnaires battled well in both games, coming to within 4-3 in the first game, and took an early lead in the second game, but Highland used their experience to come out on top in both games.

"We played better, but they scored more runs than us tonight," said Alton manager Doug Booten. "We didn't play bad; Highland number one is a bit of an older team, they have a little more experience, but we played right with them. They were just the better team tonight."

Highland field a pair of junior teams, and it was the first team that the junior Legionnaires played against, and Alton's bullpen was a big factor in the doubleheader, as the relief pitching got key outs and kept them in the game until the end.

"Our relief pitching was very good tonight, and they kept us in both games," Booten said. "I'm very happy with their effort."

The relievers were aided by the Alton catching, as both Julian Marshall and James Stendebach called great games behind the plate.

"Our two catchers, Julian and James, worked very hard tonight," Booten said. "They both called great games for our staff."

Highland jumped out to a 4-0 lead in the first two innings, scoring once in the first and three more times in the second, but Alton cut the lead to 4-1 in the bottom of the second with a run. Single runs in the fifth and sixth made it 4-3, giving the junior Legionnaires a chance, but Highland put the game away with a three-run seventh to take the first game win.

Nick Kelsay, Caden Laslie, Ashton Schepers, Marshall, Miles Windmiller and Jackson Kenney had hits for Alton, with Luke Parmentier, Nick Rayfield and Schepers driving home runs for the junior Legionnaires in the opener.

Andrew Wieneke started on the mound for Alton, and gave up four hits and four runs, three of them earned, while walking on in three innings. Jon Webb came on in the fourth and pitched well, allowing only two hits and striking out three while walking three. Schepers threw the final two innings, allowing three hits and three runs, walking two and fanning one.

In the second game, Alton jumped out to a 2-0 advantage in the first inning, but Highland scored three in both the second and third, and once more in the fourth to take the 7-2 win. Wieneke had two hits and drove home the only two Alton runs, while Seth Slayden had the only other hit in the nightcap.

Slayden started, and gave up five hits and six runs in two-and-one-third innings, walking two and striking out two, with Tyler Robinson throwing three-and-two-thirds innings, allowing a run on two hits while fanning two and walking one. Kenney pitched the seventh inning, allowing one hit while striking out one.

Booten was very proud of the effort the junior Legionnaires gave all night.

"There's no shame in losing tonight," Booten said. "Not at all."

The juniors have Wednesday off, then play a doubleheader against the Highland two team Thursday night in New Douglas, starting at 6 p.m., then play in the Illinois-Missouri Battle at Washington, Mo., in a game that starts at 4 p.m. on Sunday. It begins a busy period for the juniors, with home games next Monday and Tuesday against

Belleville and Valmeyer respectively, then another home game on July 16 against Piasa Southwestern, and then host a tournament the weekend of July 18-19, playing against both Highland teams and Valmeyer.

"It's a chance to pick up some more wins, so we'll be ready to go," Booten said.





[Chris Rhodes also contributed to this story.](#)