

Stilts Shines On Mound For Alton Post 126 American Legion Baseball Team

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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ALTON - Adam Stilts has been one of the best pitchers on an Alton Post 126 American Legion baseball team's staff that has been one of the biggest strengths of the team in the abbreviated 2020 season. On Monday night, in the first game of a doubleheader against Highland, he showed why.

Stilts struck out 13 Highland batters while allowing only one run on two hits in another masterful performance in Alton's 2-1 win in the first game. Highland came back to win the second game 10-1 to gain a split in the twin bill.

Stilts used a tried-and-true formula to keep Highland's batters off-stride and gain an advantage.

"Mainly on just getting ahead," Stilts said during a postgame interview, "and early on, they caught on, then I had to pitch more backward. And then, after that, that's basically what I rode with."

Stilts used his slider to keep Highland off-balance and to get the strikeouts with, which he used effectively. And like many other players, Stilts, who pitched at Lewis and Clark Community College in Godfrey this past spring before the college season was canceled because of the COVID-19 pandemic, is very happy to be back on the field and playing again. Like other players, he was very disappointed when the season was called off.

"Well, I was actually a freshman in college," Stilts said. "And when I heard that, I was shocked. That's nothing you really think about on a daily (basis). We got a few games in at LC."

Although the season ended up being canceled, Stilts agreed it was the right decision.

"Health first, as always," Stilts said. "That's what we've got to think of. Always health first, but when something like this happens, it's always the right call."

Still, Stilts is very happy to be back playing, and feels it's really quite a blessing to be able to play baseball.

"It's truly a blessing," Stilts said. "Whenever Doug (Booten, the Alton Post 126 manager) contacted me about the COVID league, there's no way I could say no. And I'm just speechless," he said with a smile.

For the remainder of the season, Stilts will concentrate on getting his arm stronger, which he hopes will carry over into his sophomore year for the Trailblazers.

"Mainly on just getting my arm in shape," Stilts said. "Because taking that time off, it's kind of hard to stay in shape with your arm. And trying to gain more velocity, and work on my command."

Stilts' arm is feeling very good now, and is getting stronger. And that could be a bad sign for opposing batters down the road.

"It feels great," Stilts said. "It feels great. Just only getting stronger."

Overall, he's feeling very good about playing again.

"Great. Amazing." Stilts said with a big smile.