

New Prospect League Team Announces Name: It's The Alton River Dragons

by Chris Rhodes, Reporter
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ALTON - The new name of the Prospect Baseball League team was announced today at Lloyd Hopkins Field and it will be the Alton River Dragons. Nearly 1,000 turned in recommendations for the name of the team. This is the 13th addition to the Prospect Baseball League.

Alton Mayor Brant Walker said he was extremely excited to greet the new Alton River Dragons to the community.

“The Prospect League will be great entertainment for the region,” Walker said. “I was watching one of the Cardinals first three games against Pittsburgh recently and in the third game their starting pitcher had come from the Prospect League. This is not going to be low level, but top-notch baseball.”

“It is wonderful to see the park (Gordon Moore Lloyd Hopkins Field) used and it will be a home run all the way around,” he said. “Being awarded this franchise is tremendous.”

Prospect League Commissioner Dennis Bastien said the league has been working for a year and a half with the City of Alton about bringing the club here. Bastien added that coming to Alton is phenomenal for the league.

“We love this market and are excited about it,” he said. “We live down in Southern Illinois, and the only other franchise closer is one in Cape Girardeau, MO.. More than 100,000 people are within a close radius of Lloyd Hopkins Field in Alton. It will be a great thing. We were just talking and there is no other thing like this in Alton, Bethalto or Wood River to call home. Right now everybody is a fan of the Blues or Cards, but there has never been a team to draw locally like this one.”

Mayor Walker added that the team will be family friendly and it will be affordable entertainment for area residents.

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The Prospect League is a summer collegiate wood bat league. The purpose of the league is to: (a) Provide family friendly, affordable baseball entertainment in the communities where our teams are located; (b) Provide a summer baseball program for eligible college players to give them experience using a wood bat in a competitive atmosphere; (c) Provide a venue to allow MLB Scouts to watch collegiate prospects using wood bats against live pitching in competition. Prospect League schedule is 60 games starting May 30 and ends with the Prospect League Championship Series during the second week of August.

The Prospect League also introduced Steve Marso as the owner/operator of its newest franchise. Marso is an experienced operator of summer collegiate teams and experienced minor league baseball staffer. Most recently, Marso owned and operated the Waterloo (Iowa) Bucks of the Northwoods League.

"I have gotten to know Steve very well the past several months," said Commissioner Bastien, "and we have been impressed with his knowledge, experience and dedication to summer collegiate baseball. We are proud that Steve jumped at the opportunity to make Alton a vital member of our league."

Marson said he feels grateful and blessed to be given the opportunity to make Alton a standout member of such a prestigious organization as the Prospect League.

"We have long hoped that the opportunity might come along to fulfill that dream and get back in the saddle operating a club and team in such a receptive and amazing area as Alton", announced Marso.

More from Marso will come in a weekend story about the location of Alton for the new Prospect Baseball League team.

Several additions and renovations are being discussed for Lloyd Hopkins Field prior to the opening of the 2021 PL 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 the Park staff maintains" added Bastien, "What a magnificent jewel that park is for everyone in that region."

"Lloyd Hopkins Field is an incredible asset for our community," said Parks and Recreation Director, Michael Haynes. "The city has put a lot of time and resources into bringing it back to life over the last few years. We're 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."

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