

Alton Post 126 Junior Legionnaires Use Timely Hitting, Good Pitching, Solid Defense To Go On Five-Game Winning Streak

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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ALTON - The Alton Post 126 senior American Legion baseball team has been on a big roll as of late, having won the Firecracker tournament over Fourth of July weekend, winning three of their five games played, then winning a big game over Washington, Mo. on Tuesday evening.

The junior team has been playing exceptionally well also, having won their last five games in a row before their game on Wednesday evening against the Collinsville Extreme was postponed because of rain. The senior game against Highland, scheduled for after the junior game, was also postponed.

The junior Legionnaires defeated the Piasa Southwestern JV summer team 3-1 on July 1st, then swept a doubleheader against Greenville July 2, winning 12-0 and 7-1, got past Steeleville 5-3 on July 5 and won over Breese Red 8-2 July 6.

"They've really come together," said Alton manager Doug Booten. "We've won five in a row, obviously, and the team's really coming together."

The recipe for success is a ver simple one, indeed.

"Timely hitting, good pitching and strong defense," Booten said.

Against the Piasa Birds last Thursday, Alton scored twice in the first inning before Southwestern scored once in the bottom of the inning, with Alton adding an insurance run in the top half of the fifth to take the win.

Logan Bogard had two hits for the junior Legionnaires in the game, while Reece Girth had a hit and drove home two runs, Alex Siatos and Lucas Moore each had a hit and Max Holmes also drove in a run.

Ashton Schepers went all the way on the mounds, allowing only one run on three hits, walking two and striking out seven to gain the win.

In the first game againsts Greenville in their doubleheader sweep, Alton scored once in the second, seven times in the fourth and four runs in the sixth to take the win, with the game terminated due to the 10-run rule.

Schepers led the junior Legionnaires with two hits and two RBIs, while Seth Slayden, Moore and James Stendebach all had two hits and an RBI each, Girth had a hit and three RBIs, Tyler Robinson had a hit and an RBI, Tim Melton had a hit and both Trace Trettenero and Bogard each drove home a run.

Slayden and Ben Bangert combined on a no-hitter for Alton, with Sladen going five innings on the mound, walking two and fanning six, while Bangert pitched a perfect sixth inning to wrap up the win.

In the nightcap, Alton scored twice in the bottom of the first, while Greenville countered with a third inning run to cut the lead to 2-1. The junior Legionnaires then scored four times in the fifth and once more in the sixth to take their 7-1 win and the sweep.

Bogard had a bases-clearing double that drove in three runs for his only hit of the day, while Siatos had a hit and two RBIs, Schepers had a hit and also drove in a run and Girth, Holmes and Moore also had hits.

Girth threw a complete game for Alton, allowing a run on four hits while striking out eight.

In Monday evening's win over Steeleville on the road, Alton jumped out on tip with a run in the first, but Steeleville scored twice in the bottom of the inning to take a 2-1 lead, then extended it with a run in the third. Alton then scored four times in the top half of the fifth to take their 5-3 win and extend their winning streak to four.

Schepers had two hits and two RBIs in the win, while Moore had a pair of hits, Bogard had a hit and an RBI, Siatos, Slayden, William Frasier, Jr. and Holmes all had hits and Girth drove in a pair of runs.

Robinson pitched four innings on the mound for the junior Legionnaires, allowing only one hit while walking three and striking out four, Graham McAfoos threw two-and-two-thirds innings, allowing one run on one hit, walking two and fanning one and Stendeback pitched the final third, allowing two runs on a hit while walking three.

In the Tuesday night win over Breese Red, Breese scored a run in the top of the third to take the lead, but Alton countered with four runs in the home half, then scored twice in the fourth to go ahead 6-1. Both teams traded runs in the fifth, and Alton scored another run in the sixth to take an 8-2 win.

Siatos led the way for the junior Legionnaires with three hits and an RBI, with Jon Webb having two hits and an RBI, Stendeback had a hit and drove home two runs and Moore, Bogard, McAfoos and Trettenero all had hits.

Bogard went six innings on the mound for Alton, allowing two runs on six hits while walking two and fanning eight, with Siatos pitched the seventh, striking out two.

As with the senior team, the District 22 playoffs will be starting later this month for the junior Legionnaires, and both Booten and the players share one very big goal for the team.

"The goal for the juniors is to win the state title," Booten said. "We've got a good a shot as anyone."