

River Dragons Win Completion Of Suspended Game 10-7, Then Take Regularly Scheduled Game 8-3 To Gain Sweep Of Gems

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QUINCY - The Alton River Dragons scored four times in the bottom of the seventh inning to take the first game over the Quincy Gems, then went out to a 7-1 lead after two innings to win the second game over Quincy 8-3 and sweep a doubleheader against the Gems in a Prospect League twinbill played Wednesday at Quincy University Stadium.

The first game was the resumption of one that was suspended back in June that was played at Lloyd Hopkins Field in Gordon Moore Park before the regularly scheduled game was played.

In the suspended game, Quincy struck first with a two-run top of the first, with Alton scoring once in the second and twice in the third to take a 3-2 lead. The teams traded runs in the fourth inning, with the River Dragons scoring once in the fifth to go up 5-3 and the Gems scoring twice in the top of the sixth to tie things up at 5-5. Alton then scored a single run in the bottom of the sixth to go back up 6-5, Quincy tied the game back up in the seventh with a single run, but the River Dragons scored four times in the bottom of the inning to take the lead for good at 10-6. The Gems scored a single run in the top of the ninth, but the River Dragons held on to win 10-7.

Edwardsville product Blake Burris led Alton with three hits and two RBIs, while Troy Johnson and Andrew Nigut each had two hits and two RBIs apiece, Nick Neibauer came up with a pair of hits, David Harris had a hit and drove in a run, Alton product Mike Hampton, Josh Johnson, Brady Mutz, Clayton Dean, Bryce Zupan from Civic Memorial, Jake Rivers and Thomas Ayers all had hits while Boston Merila also drove in a run.

Justin Needles got the start, and went three innings, allowing two runs on three hits while walking three, then was relieved by Parker Johnson, who threw five innings and gave up five runs on six hits, walking four, then Tyler Bell threw the ninth, not allowing a run or hit while fanning two to end the game.

The second game was a seven-inning contest, although the suspended game went the full nine innings, and the River Dragons scored three times in the top of the opening inning, with the Gems countering with a run to make it 3-1. Alton then scored four more times in the second to go ahead 7-1, but the Gems cut the lead to 7-3 with two in the fifth. Alton got one of the runs back in the top of the sixth to make the 8-3 final.

Josh Johnson led the Dragons with a pair of hits and an RBI, while Mutz had a hit and drove in two runs, Burris, Nigut and Zupan all had a hit and RBI each and Merila, Ayers and Troy Johnson each had a hit.

Zach Carden was the starting pitcher for Alton, and he went four-and-a-third innings, allowing three runs on five hits, walking one and striking out five. Geoff Withers of

Civic Memorial came on and threw for an inning-and-two-thirds, giving up a hit while walking one and Drew Patterson pitched the seventh, also allowing a hit while striking out one.

With the sweep, Alton improves to 22-26 on the season and hosts the Springfield Sliders Thursday evening in a 6:35 start, then goes up against the O'Fallon, Mo., Hoots at home Friday night, also at 6:35 p.m. The River Dragons and Gems play each other again Saturday night at QU Stadium in a 6:35 p.m. first pitch, then play at CarShield Field in O'Fallon against the Hoots at 6:35 p.m. Sunday night. After the regular Monday off, the River Dragons host the Cape Catfish of Cape Girardeau, Mo., Tuesday in a 6:35 p.m. first pitch, then go on the road against the Terre Haute, Ind., REX at Bob Warn Field at Sycamore Stadium Wednesday evening in a 5:30 p.m. first pitch.