

Josh Johnson Hits First Inning Three-Run Homer, Stilts Fans Six As River Dragons Win 9-5

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ALTON - Josh Johnson's three-run homer in the first inning helped set the tone, and Alton's Adam Stilts struck out six batters as the Alton River Dragons defeated the Springfield Sliders 9-5 in a Prospect League baseball game played Thursday evening at Lloyd Hopkins Filed at Gordon Moore Park.

The win was the River Dragons' third straight, going back to a doubleheader sweep in Quincy the day before, as the team goes into the stretch run of the season.

Johnson's homer gave Alton a 3-0 lead after one inning, but the Sliders countered with two runs in the third before the River Dragons matched it with a two-run fifth to take a 5-2 lead. Both teams scored twice in the sixth, then the Sliders scored once in the top of the eighth, but Alton scored twice in the bottom of the inning to make the 9-5 final.

Both Josh Johnson and Bryce Zupan of Civic Memorial had two hits and three RBIs in the game for the Dragons, while Troy Johnson also had two hits, Brady Mutz and Andrew Nigut each had a hit and RBI and David Harris also had a hit in the game.

Stilts pitched well in his five-and-a-third innings as the starting pitcher, allowing four runs on five hits, walking no one and striking out six, Brandon Hampton of Civic Memorial threw two-and-a-third innings in relief, allowing a run on two hits while walking only one and Justin Needles pitched the last inning-and-a-third, allowing only three hits while fanning one.

Alton is now 23-26 on the year, and concludes its week starting on Friday with a game against the O'Fallon, Mo., Hoots in a 6:35 first pitch at Lloyd Hopkins Field, then playing their third game in four nights on the road against the Quincy Gems, with the first pitch at Quincy University Stadium Saturday night at 6:35 p.m. The River Dragons and Hoots then play at CarShield Field in O'Fallon Sunday night at 6:35 p.m., and after having their regular Monday off, Alton hosts the Cape Catfish of Cape Girardeau, Mo., starting at 6:35 p.m Tuesday evening, then play the Terre Haute, Ind., REX at Bob Warm Field at Sycamore Stadium on Wednesday, starting at 5:30 p.m. Alton time. The River Dragons meet the Danville Dans at Danville Stadium Thursday at 6:30 p.m., and return home to play the Catfish next Friday night at 6:35 p.m.