



AHS Holds Fifth Annual Alumni Baseball Game At Hopkins Field To Great Success

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
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ALTON - The even-year alums have won the Alton High School Alumni Baseball Game every time since it's inception. They wanted to make sure they kept it that way.

It meant a little more being the first time the game was held at Lloyd Hopkins Field. For most of these alums, this was their old stomping grounds.

"There was a lot of talk in the dugouts about having been here in past times, this was our home field. And how nice it is now, and how much of an event this has become, it's just great," former AHS baseball coach and current AHS principal Mike Bellm said after the game.

He also gave great thanks to Joe Roderick for setting up this event every year.

Thanks to a massive eight-run fifth inning, the even-year alums took the game by a score of 14-9.

In hindsight, the score of the game doesn't really matter. The most important thing about this game is that it gives these guys the chance to come to hang out and recollect with old friends and teammates, some that whom they probably only see once a year at this event.

As for the 2003 alum and main organizer of this event Joe Roderick, he was just ecstatic after the game despite the loss.

"Everything went perfect," he said.

In years past the game either had to be rescheduled or called off early due to the weather.

It was not the case this time around as the alums had a gorgeous 70-degree Saturday night. Because of the weather and it is the first time at Hopkins, the stands were filled with family and friends of the alums.

According to Roderick, it's the most people he's seen come out to one of these games.

The even-year alums were coached by current AHS baseball coach Scott Harper as well as Brett Huff and Ben Dell. They were managed by crowd favorite Larry Nickel.

As for the odd-year alums, they were coached by former AHS coach and now current AHS principal Mike Bellm, as well as graduate John Ducey.

According to Bellm, in years past, this game actually had a home plate umpire. This time around that was not the case as Harper and Bellm took turns calling balls and strikes throughout the game.

"When we started we had umpires, but you never know what the pace of the game is going to be, and it's honestly easier to almost go back to do it the way we did when we held practice games, just one guy in the middle," Bellm said. "I think it gives a little more freedom to switch your pitchers and do things like that."

He was also thankful for his opportunity to coach a lot of the alums that took the field Saturday night.

"It's just so great to get back out here, see all these guys, and get to hang around them just for tonight. It's a great facility, but they really bring life to it. I'm just fortunate that I got to coach a lot of them because they are responsible for a lot of the wins in the Alton High School baseball program's history," Bellm said.

2009 alum Jared Dooley was one of the star players during the game coming up with some flashy infield plays. He was also stoked to be back out there.

"We enjoy ourselves, it's all for fun," Dooley said. "We haven't played in so many years. It's good to see everyone as well. I think that's the main thing. Everybody's getting together, seeing your old coaches and teammates even if they're on the other side. That's the best part about it, catching up and reminiscing on old times."

As for the game itself, the even-year alums have outscored the odd-year team 39-9 overall in the now four games that have been played.

The game, typically held on Father's Day weekend, was a major success. It was so cool to see these alums' families and children cheering them on from the stands and to see the alums go out there and act like kids again playing the game for the first time.

Roderick says that he hopes to continue growing the crowd out at these games. The game had free admission, however, donations were accepted for the AHS baseball program. There was also a 50/50 raffle that reached up to \$422 dollars, with proceeds also going back into the program.

The alums would like to thank their sponsors because without them the game wouldn't be possible. They'd like to give thanks to Bristow's Indoor Batting Cages & Golf Simulator, Alton Sports Tap, Alton River Dragons, and Alton Mungenast and Burkard Toyota.

