



King Homers, Has Two Hits, Three RBIs, Needles Goes Six Innings For Win As River Dragons Defeat Bees 8-4, Extend Division Lead

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ALTON - Eddie King hit a two-run homer in the bottom of the fourth, scoring Marcus Heusohn ahead of him and had two hits and drove in three runs, while starting pitcher Justin Needles went six innings and struck out two as the Alton River Dragons won their Prospect League baseball game over the Burlington, Ia., Bees 8-4 Monday evening at Lloyd Hopkins Field at Gordon Moore Park.



The win extended the River Dragons' lead in the Prairie Land Division of the Western Conference to one full game ahead of the idle O'Fallon, Mo., Hoots as the final week of the league's first half of its split season began. The division champion at the end of the first half clinches a playoff berth in August.

The Bees opened the scoring with a single run in the fourth to go on top, but Alton countered with King's two-run shot to take the lead for good at 2-1. The River Dragons got a RBI single from Blake Stenger in the fifth to expand the lead to 3-1, then in the sixth, King drove home a run with a base hit, scoring along with Edwardsville's Blake Burris on an error by the center fielder that make it 6-1. Alton scored a single run in the seventh, both teams traded runs in the eighth and the Bees scored twice in the ninth to produce the 8-4 final.

Besides King's performance at the plate, Stenger and Gage Mestas both had a hit and RBI each, Burris, Heusohn, Ben Gallaher and Kurtis Reid all had hits and Noah Bush also drove in a run with a ground out in the seventh.

Needles only allowed an earned run on three hits while walking two and fanning two in his six innings of work on the mound to earn the win, while Brayden Ramsey also struck out two and Carson Richardson fanned one.

The River Dragons have now won three straight and are 15-10, with the Hoots in second place at 14-11, and play at home on Tuesday against the Normal Cornbelters in a 6:35 p.m. start, then play their final road game of the first half at the Terre Haute, Ind., REX Wednesday night in a 6:30 p.m., St. Louis time, start.

After an off night on Thursday, Alton concludes the first half at home on the Fourth of July weekend, starting with two very crucial games against O'Fallon Friday and Saturday, both games starting at 6:35 p.m., then conclude the first half with games Sunday and next Monday, the Fourth of July, against the Cape Catfish of Cape Girardeau, Mo., with the Sunday game starting at 5:35 p.m. and the holiday game starting at 6:35 p.m.