

Burris' Four Hits, Hailstone's 11th-Inning Sac Fly Gives River Dragons Dramatic 6-5 Win

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BURLINGTON, Ia. - Cameron Hailstone's sacrifice fly in the top of the 11th inning scored Edwardsville's Blake Burris with the winning run as the Alton River Dragons defeated the Burlington Bees 6-5 in a Prospect League game Thursday evening at Community Field in Burlington.

The win was an important one for the River Dragons as they trail the Cape Catfish of Cape Girardeau, Mo. by a half-game in the Prairie Land Division of the Western

Conference for the second-half championship of the league's split season. Cape swept a doubleheader from the O'Fallon, Mo., Hoots Thursday 9-1 and 3-0 Thursday and now have a 14-12 record, while Alton is 14-13. The River Dragons, who won the first-half championship, host the division championship game Sunday evening.

The River Dragons scored first in the top of the third, getting an RBI single from Burris to break out on top 1-0, then both Hailstone and Marcus Heusohn also stroked RBI singles to put Alton on top 3-0. In the bottom of the inning, Marcos Sanchez hit a two-run homer to cut the Alton lead to 3-2, and in the fifth, Heusohn hit into a force play at second, with Burris scoring to increase the Alton lead to 4-2. Kevin Santiago singled home a run in the bottom of the eighth to make it 4-3 for Alton, then the Bees tied the game in the bottom of the ninth when Cedric Dunnwald singled home the tying run to draw Burlington level at 4-4 and force extra innings.

In the 10th, Bryce Zupan of Civic Memorial singled home Heusohn to give the Dragons a 5-4 lead, but in the bottom of the inning, Nolan Elmore returned the favor, singling home the tying run to make the score 5-5. In the 11th, Hailstone's line drive was caught by the center fielder, but Burris tagged up and scored what proved to be the winning run to give Alton the key 6-5 win.

Burris led the way for the Dragons with four hits and an RBI, while both Hailstone and Heusohn had two hits and two RBIs each, Gunnar Doyle and Ethan Kleinheider both had a pair of hits, Zupan had a hit and RBI and Mike Hampton of Alton had a hit.

Alex Redman started on the mound for the River Dragons and allowed two runs, both earned, on five hits while striking out two, Ryne Hanslow of Piasa Southwestern fanned one, Carson Richardson struck out three and winning pitcher Erik Broekemeier of Metro-East Lutheran got the win by going two innings, giving up two runs, one earned on three hits, walking one and fanning one. Kalen Reardon got the save, striking out one.

The River Dragons, now 32-26 overall, play the Springfield Lucky Horseshoes in a home-and-home series to end the regular season, the first game in Springfield Friday at 6:30 p.m. and the second game at Lloyd Hopkins Field at Gordon Moore Park, starting at 6:35 p.m.

The Catfish and Hoots also play in a home-and-home set, the first game in O'Fallon and the second in Cape Girardeau. The River Dragons will host the Prairie Land Division championship game Sunday night, starting at 6:35 p.m.