

Eddie King Jr. Earns Prospect League Player Of The Year - Three Other River Dragons Earn All-Star Team Accolades

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
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ALTON - The Prospect League announced its 2022 Postseason All-Stars and award winners Monday morning. The all-star teams and awards were voted on by the league's 16 field managers.

The Danville Dans led the Eastern Conference with six all-stars, while the Alton River Dragons led the Western Conference with four.

The Prospect League's Mike Schmidt Player of the Year is Alton's Eddie King, Jr. The University of Louisville outfielder hit .310 with a league-best 15 home runs and 49 RBIs. A member of the River Dragons from Opening Day, King played in 49 games, making 48 starts. He slugged .632 and owned an on-base percentage of .440. King also stole 31 bases on 35 attempts.



King was more than grateful to have won the award.

"First off I would like to thank Darrell, Dallas, and Steve for having me come out to Alton to play collegiate summer baseball," he said. "It was a pleasure playing in Alton and meeting forever brothers along the way. I thank the fans and community, as well as the support, which was unreal the whole summer."

"It made me feel like a superstar even though I have a long way to go to claim that title. I want to finish by saying I couldn't have done this without everyone around me,

especially my family encouraging me throughout the good and bad. I really want to thank the Prospect League and I am grateful for the Player of the Year and it's something that I will remember forever."

Another no-doubter for the Prospect League Western Conference All-Star team is, of course, Blake Burris. When not playing for the River Dragons he's an outfielder at Lewis and Clark Community College.



He led the River Dragons with his .361 batting average throughout 216 at-bats. He batted in 43 runs which was second on the team right behind King's 49.

When he got on base, which he averaged .433 OBS, he was a pitcher's worst nightmare. Burris notched 47 stolen bases which isn't just first on the team, but the whole league.

"All of these guys are well deserving of these accolades," River Dragons field manager Darrell Handelsman said. "Blake and Eddie led our offense all season. Whether it was stealing a base or getting a big hit, they were usually in the middle of it. They also played great defense in the outfield, showing off strong, accurate arms."

Another All-Star for Alton was pitcher Adam Stilts, also out of LCCC. He was one of the River Dragons' go-to pitchers, especially down the stretch and into the playoffs.

He made 10 starts and 11 appearances this season pitching 64.1 innings, overall ending the season with a positive 5-4 record. Throughout those games, he grabbed a team-high 56 strikeouts.

"Adam Stilts has been the rock of our pitching staff for two summers," Handelsman said. "He's a strike-throwing machine who gets better in the biggest moments. His playoff performance is proof of that."

The team's final All-Star is Noah Bush from Iowa Western Community College.

He made appearances in 13 games as a relief pitcher with 15.2 innings pitched. When he entered those games though, he was throwing lights out, ending the season with 28 strikeouts.

He made more appearances besides pitching. He started 40 of the 43 games he made appearances in for the offense. He had a batting average of .229 throughout 157 AB's. He finished the year with 23 RBI's.

"Noah Bush showed some serious arm talent," Handelsman said. "We don't win the first half without him closing out games."

After an incredible second season as a franchise, the River Dragons blew away everyone's expectations. They finished with a 32-28 record and were runners-up in the Prospect League Championship. Those four All-Stars were all a huge help in achieving an unforgettable summer season.