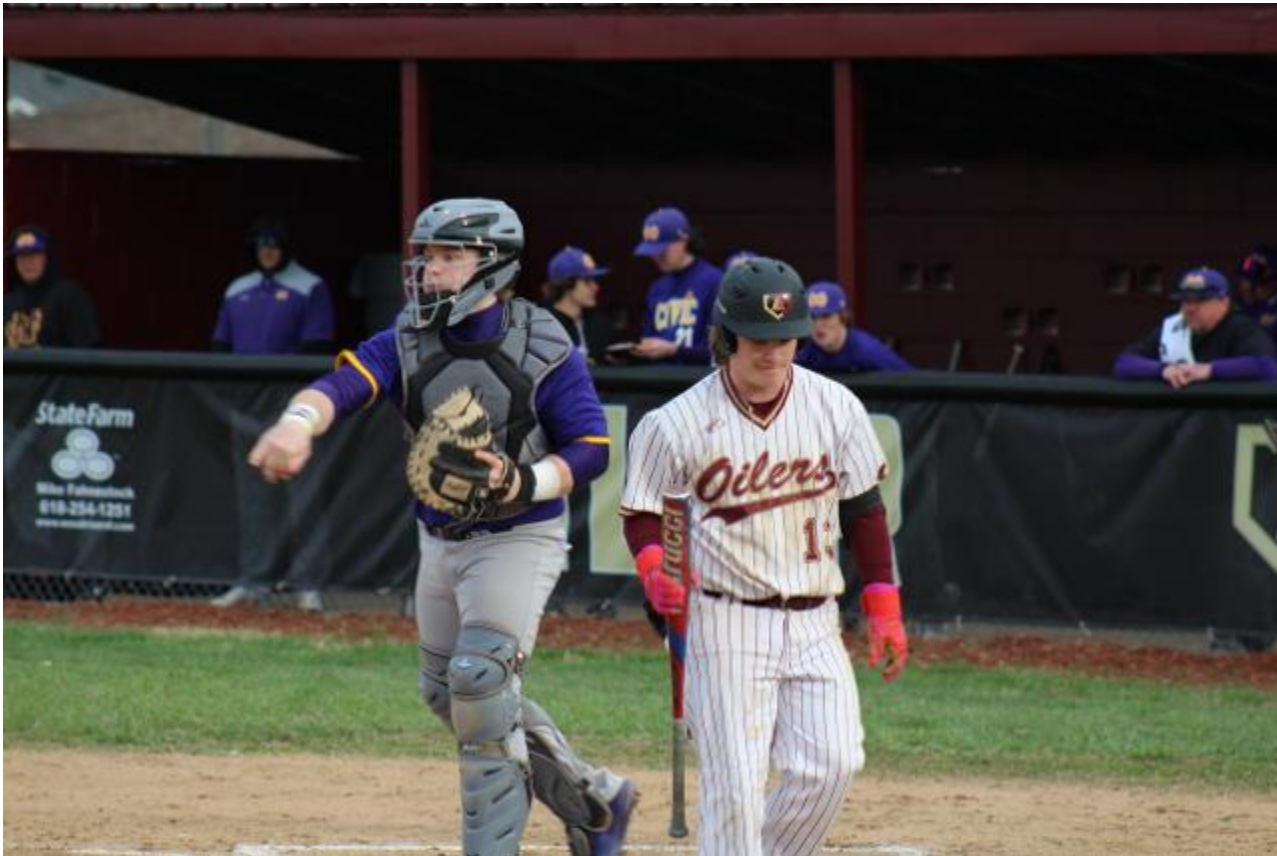


# CM Stages Late Comeback, Wins 8-5 At EAWR

by Nathan Tucker  
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WOOD RIVER - The Oilers of East Alton-Wood River hosted the Civic Memorial Eagles in varsity baseball action on Thursday afternoon, and played a much-improved game after a tough 13-3 loss to Roxana on Tuesday. Unfortunately for the home team, the game was flipped on its head late, and the visiting Eagles took the contest 8-5.

Senior Seth Slayden started on the mound for the Oilers, facing off against CM's freshman starter Jacob Flowers. Both pitchers worked really well at Norris Dorsey

Field, while the stats will show that each gave up five runs, both starters also were consistent around the zone. Slayden finished with five strikeouts, while Flowers threw six of his own.

“I thought he threw really well,” said CM head coach Nick Smith on Thursday’s opposing starter. “He kept us off-balance, we were pretty uncomfortable in the batter’s box at times. (EAWR) did a really nice job, they played well today, and we didn’t cash in on some opportunities where we had baserunners in the first four or five innings.”

“He’s a four-year varsity player,” said Oilers head coach Nick Dorsey of his starter Slayden. “He’s the standard of what it means to be a good student, a good teammate, a competitor. I wish I could have a whole team of Seth Slaydens.”



CM was first on the scoreboard after a Kael Hawk RBI fielder’s choice grounder drove home Bryer Arview in the third. The Oilers answered quickly in the bottom half of the inning, plating three runners on four hits to take the lead early on.

A passed ball in the fourth inning gave the Eagles their second run, cutting into EAWR’s lead briefly. A big two-RBI double for the Oilers’ Dillon Gerner stretched the lead out to 5-2, and put the home team firmly in the driver’s seat heading to the late innings.

“Dillon Gerner had a huge hit,” said EAWR head coach Nick Dorsey. “That gave us the lead in the middle of the game. Today was a great game by the boys. We were inches away from being the ones on top today.”

Those inches Nick Dorsey mentioned came in the penultimate sixth inning, where a two-RBI double by Kael Hawk missed the outstretched glove of an Oiler outfielder by maybe a foot. Instead of a long second out, the big hit tied the game for CM.

“Finally we got through Slayden,” said CM’s Nick Smith following the win. “We got through and had a couple of big hits there in the last few innings. We’ll always take it.”

Not just Seth Slayden and Jacob Flowers had solid days on the mound. Nick Smith turned to sophomore Brayden Prott for the final two frames, and Prott pitched two scoreless innings and struck out three.

“He attacks hitters, and he’s a bulldog,” Nick Smith said on Prott. “He came in for two innings and threw really well. He did a great job of closing it out for us.”

EAWR’s attempted late-game rally fell short despite another Dillon Gerner double in the seventh. Gerner was 3-4 with two RBIs on the day, the best offensive performance for either team.

The Oilers fall to 2-9, but as Nick Dorsey said Tuesday after the loss to Roxana, this is a team he feels is better than its record. On Thursday, he was even more optimistic.

“Like I said (on Tuesday) our record doesn’t show what this team brings to the table,” Dorsey said following the game Thursday. “We’re fighting in a lot of our games. I really think that we keep grinding and putting the right foot forward, you’re going to see a change in the score and you’re going to see that we’re going to be the ones on top. I believe in these boys.”

With the win, CM improves to .500, 5-5 on the young season, and heads to Staunton this weekend to face the Bulldogs. Head coach Nick Smith is taking a steady approach with his club this year.

“Building momentum for us is just taking it one day at a time.” Nick Smith noted postgame. “We just try to get better every day.”