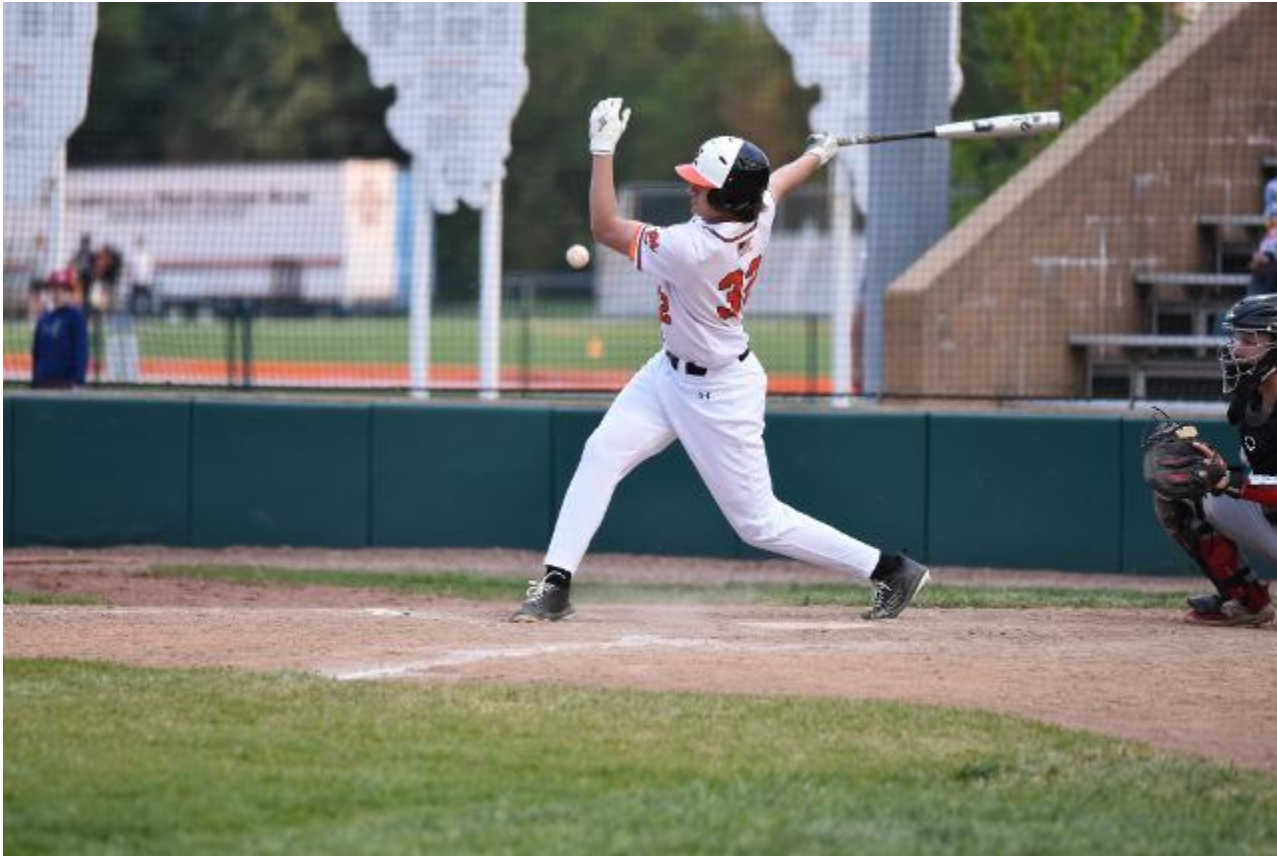
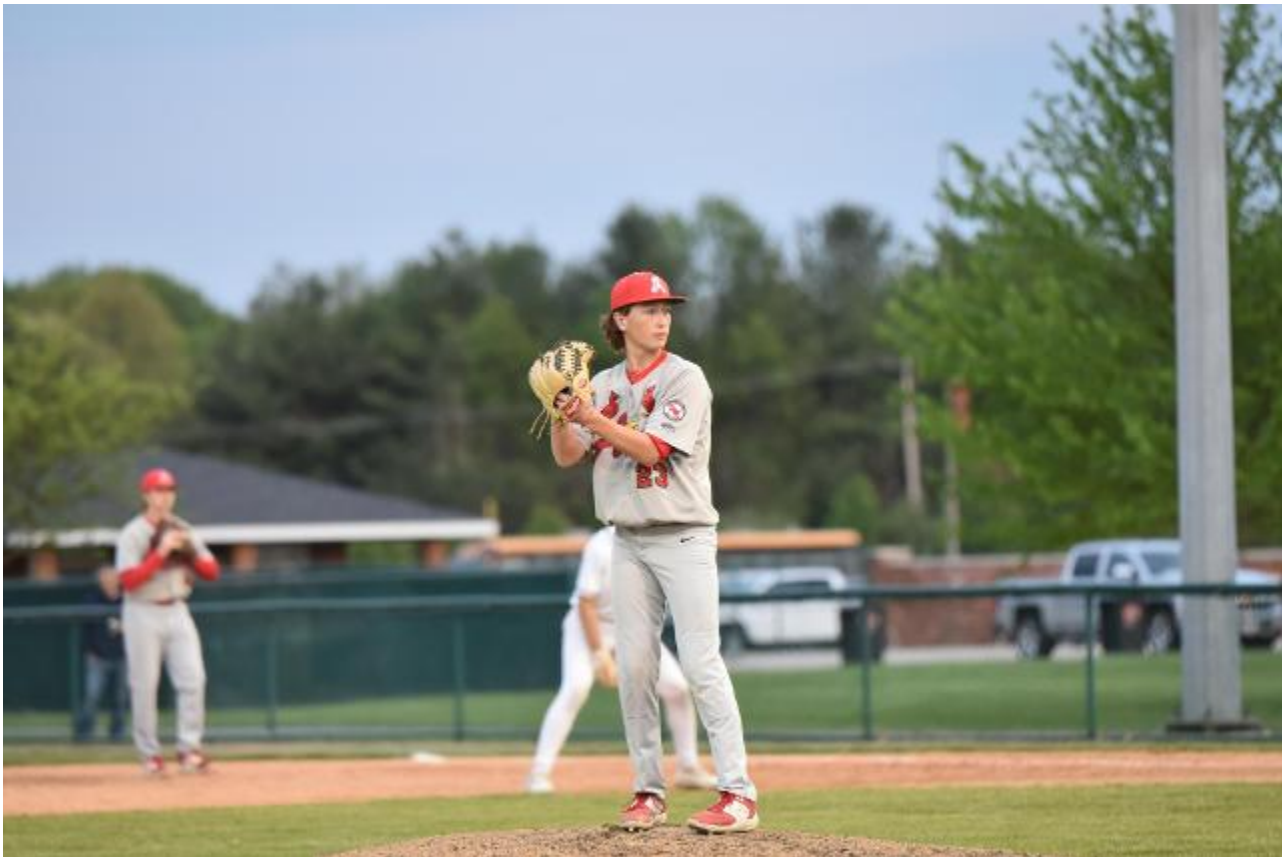


Copeland, Hendrickson Each Have Two Hits, Three RBIs, Tigers Take Advantage Of 14 Walks In 16-6 Win Over Alton

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - Both Caeleb Copeland and Andrew Hendrickson had two hits and three RBIs as Edwardsville took advantage of 14 walks issued by Alton pitching in going on to a six inning, 16-6 win over the Redbirds in a Southwestern Conference baseball game Tuesday afternoon and evening at Tom Pile Field.

The Tigers were able to grind out the win in a game that lasted nearly three hours and also saw Edwardsville being able to take advantage of opportunities to score runs.

"I thought we continued to fight throughout the game," said Tigers head coach Tim Funkhouser, "and things didn't really click for us from the start. But we continued to battle and hang in there, we saw some good things and we some other things that we'll continue to work on. But we're looking for that rhythm and ability to get that first guy out each inning and get back to the dugout and stack some good at-bats."

The Tigers bounced back after allowing two runs in the opening inning and four more in the third and kept grinding away, putting together good hits that led to runs.

"It was good to see Copeland end the game on a good laser to center field," Funkhouser said, "and those type of things, you can carry away that you've got some positive times like that. And for a hitter like him, he's been swinging OK, but we know he's got more in him and put a charge in that ball there can carry in and some other ones, because that was a pretty good swing."

The Tigers lost starting pitcher Joe Chiarodo to concussion protocol after being hit in the head with a pitch in the first inning. Chiarodo did seem OK, but was taken out of the game as a precaution.





"Yeah, it was unfortunate Chiarodo had to come out with getting hit in the head and concussion," Funkhouser said, "and that kind of changed the dynamic of the game a lot. And I was just something that happens within the game; there was no ill intent from the other team at all. But we'll continue to monitor him and then, in that case there, we made a lot of different adjustments and we had some opportunities for some guys and throughout the game, some guys made a step forward and some guys kind of sat in that same spot. But the beauty about it is that all of our guys are working really hard and I feel real positive about us moving forward, because it wasn't totally clicking today and we came away with a victory and our guys continue to work and practice really well. So that's fun to see daily."

The 14 walks did hurt Alton, along with three errors. The Redbirds hung in and did some good things, but not enough to carry the day.

"Well, it's a disappointing effort from that," said Alton head coach Scott Harper. "Name of the game, you've got to be able to pitch, you've got to throw strikes enough. Too many free passes just allowed them when the hits do mix in adds up to some runs."

The Redbirds did take advantage of early opportunities to score their runs, taking an early lead, then cutting the Tigers' lead to 9-6 in the third.

"We had a nice big hit there as we got the bases loaded," Harper said, "took advantage of that situation, got a nice big hit. Would have been nice to keep adding to it, but we'll take it. And then, we took advantage of their wildness in the third and were able to score some more runs, too, but not enough today."

Overall, the Redbirds have played well and have been competitive and Harper has been pleased with their efforts.

"We're doing alright," Harper said. "We're being competitive, we've had some one-sided games that we didn't compete as well as we had hoped. But we're right there, just got to keep reminding it's high school guys and we're just trying to get them to be consistent."

The Redbirds jumped on top in the opening inning when a walk, a hit batsman and an error loaded the bases for Will Weirich, who singled home Deon Harrington and Jayden Diaz to put Alton on top 2-0. In the bottom of the inning, Cole Funkhouser singled and Chiarodo was hit in the head by a pitch, after which he was taken out as a precaution. A fly out advanced the runners, who were singled home by Copeland to tie the game 2-2. Another hit and walk reloaded the bases, where Lucas Huebner walked and Lucas Krebs was hit by a pitch to force home two more runs to give the Tigers a 4-2 lead.

In the second inning, Hendrickson doubled home two more runs with one out and the Tigers scored three more runs on a wild pitch, an error and another hit batsman to make the score 9-3. The Redbirds rallied with four runs in the top of the third on a pair of wild pitches and a pair of errors, with the big blow being a RBI single by Austin Rathgeb as the Redbirds cut the lead to 9-6.

The Tigers got a run in the fourth on a RBI single by Hunter Baugh, then scored four more times in the fifth, taking advantage of six Alton walks in the inning and a sacrifice fly, then ended the game with two in the sixth on a bases-loaded walk and a long single to the center field fence by Copeland, which gave the Tigers the 10-run rule win 16-6.

The Tigers are now 16-6, while the Redbirds go to 7-12 and will face each other again at Redbirds Field on Thursday in a 4:30 p.m. start. The Tigers then face Ft. Zumwalt West on Friday, then play a home-and-home set against Belleville West on May 2 and 4, the first game at West and the second at home, with all games starting at 4:30 p.m.

The Redbirds meet Waterloo Gibault Catholic at GCS Ballpark in Sauget on May 1 in a 6:30 p.m. start, then meet Collinsville in a home-and-home series on May 2 and 4, the first game at Fletcher Field in Woodland Park and the second game at Redbirds Field, both starting at 4:30 p.m.

[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)