

Jayden Diaz Shows Leadership For Alton Baseball Team, Is An Auto Butler Male Athlete Of The Month For The Redbirds

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ALTON - Alton High School senior baseball captain and catcher Jayden Diaz has enjoyed a good season for the Redbirds as the calendar is about to turn into May and into the stretch run for the regular season into the IHSA playoffs.

Although he went a combined zero-for-three in his team's Southwestern Conference losses to Edwardsville 16-6 on Apr. 25 and 13-1 on Apr. 26 that put Alton's record at 7-13, Diaz has enjoyed a good season to date.

Diaz has hit .341 in games through Apr. 26, with three home runs and 13 RBIs, with an on-base percentage of .547 and five stolen bases. He had provided leadership and guidance to the other players on the team and is a team captain who leads by example.



For all of his efforts both on and off the field, Diaz has been named an Auto Butler Athlete of the Month for the Redbirds.

Diaz, who plays for head coach Scott Harper, felt good after the Redbirds' loss Apr. 25 and also is trying to keep the team's spirits up, staying positive and upbeat.

"You know, I'm feeling great," Diaz said in a postgame interview. "Like, you've just got to keep a positive mindset, especially as a captain and as a catcher. You know what you were getting yourself into, so you've just got to be prepared for whatever comes your way and look at it as a positive mindset."

The Redbirds have played well, if inconsistent, this season and Diaz felt he's played well this season.

"I've been playing good," Diaz said. "I like to keep myself humbled a bit, Obviously, I have some things I need to perfect and then, just hopefully, continue to show leadership for my team."

Diaz feels the team has great spirit and amazing chemistry, where everyone looks out for each other and is willing to do what they can to help the Redbirds win.

"The chemistry's amazing," Diaz said. "Everybody loves each other, it's just like a lot of guys are not new to varsity baseball and they're kind of getting back into it. And so, we're slowly building our way up and we've made a lot of improvements since we first started."

The Redbirds did take advantage of opportunities in both the first and third innings to score their six runs, but the pitchers had trouble finding the strike zone, with Alton pitching issuing 14 walks in the game, along with some costly errors. Diaz knows that the mistakes can be cleaned up and help the team improve.

"Yeah, for sure," Diaz said. "Again, it's just like getting comfortable on the mound. A lot of guys, they're trying to be too perfect on a lot of pitches when they just need to trust themselves and throw strikes. And it'll take some time, because these guys are still young and they've got a lot of time to develop as a player."

And as the final stretch of the season is about to begin, Diaz has some goals for both himself and the team as he gets ready to play for Wabash Valley Community College in Mt. Carmel, Ill., next spring.

"I just want to continue to help my team get better," Diaz said, "no matter what it takes. For myself, just continue to develop as a player, again, perfect a lot of the things that I still need to perfect and get ready for college baseball. We're just getting better every day and we're going to continue to play as best as we can."