



Marquette Defeats East Alton-Wood River 7-4, Oilers Recognize Seniors

by Nathan Tucker
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WOOD RIVER - Friday was Senior Night for the East Alton-Wood River baseball Oilers, as they celebrated their seniors who've put in the hard yards wearing maroon and gold at Norris Dorsey Field. The Oilers hosted Marquette, and the visiting Explorers took the day by a 7-4 scoreline.

The Oiler seniors celebrated on the afternoon were, in numerical order: #2 Lucas Moore, #11 Landon Tinnon, #12 Tyler Robinson, #19 Ayden Tinnon, and #22 Seth Slayden. Slayden was the Oilers starting pitcher on the afternoon, Moore started at shortstop, and Tyler Robinson manned left field for Senior Night.

EAWR's celebrations were short-lived, as Marquette scored two runs in the top of the first to jump out to an early 2-0 lead. Neither run was the fault of Slayden's, the first was the result of a wild throw from shortstop Lucas Moore, the second was Oiler first baseman Tim Melton missing a throw and the ball going out of play.

Marquette got two runs in the top of the first without so much as hitting the ball to the outfield. In the bottom half of the first, Explorers starter (albeit in a bullpen game) Hayden Sherman got to work, recording three strikeouts in four batters to solidify his team's early lead.

“End of a long week,” said Marquette head baseball coach Tim Fahnestock following the game. “You kind of have to go by committee sometimes, and that’s where we had to end up today. I think it helps us a bit, keeps Wood River off balance because we have a different guy out there every inning.”

The Oilers fought back in the second, a quick one-two-three inning on the mound for Seth Slayden, punctuated with catching the Marquette eight and nine-hole hitters looking for strikeouts. Slayden’s stuff was sharp all game, tallying eight strikeouts in six innings of work.

At the plate, EAWR center fielder Hayden Copeland circled the bases for an inside-the-park home run to lead off the bottom of the second, followed by Seth Slayden who reached on a single, advanced on a wild pitch, and finally scored from second on a Marquette throwing error.

“Hayden Copeland lit a spark under us,” said EAWR head coach Nick Dorsey postgame. “I’ve never seen these boys as fired up as they were after his big hit. He’s been due, I couldn’t be more proud of the kid.

The Explorers answered back with an inside-the-park home run of their own in the third, a two-run shot to retake a two-run lead. Myles Paniagua would come around to score after a throwing error to add a fifth run for Marquette in the third.

Not done fighting yet, the Oilers came back in the third inning with a leadoff triple from senior shortstop Lucas Moore. Moore was driven home by Dillon Gerner, and the Oilers kept this one a ballgame, down 5-3 after three innings in Wood River.

“Wood River came out and battled us,” said Marquette coach Tim Fahnestock. “Their Senior Night, we know they wanted to get the W. But I think our pitchers did a very good job.”

Marquette would limit the damage, especially in the later innings, as a bullpen game for the Explorers saw a small platoon of pitchers get valuable late-season innings. Andrew Roth relieved starter Hayden Sherman after just two innings, and Marquette rotated pitchers in and out on a per-inning basis from the third frame onward.

Marquette tacked on their sixth run in the fifth. Right fielder Hayden Garner led off the inning with a triple and scored on a Myles Paniagua sacrifice fly. The Oilers answered in similar fashion, their right fielder Caleb Handler smoked a triple into deep left field, and came home on a sacrifice fly to make it 6-4 through five innings.

Marquette added an insurance run off a Hayden Sherman RBI single that drove home Charlie Fahnestock to push their lead to 7-4. That's all the insurance the visiting Explorers would need.

Jack Spain came in to shut the door late for Marquette. Spain came in and struck out four of the six Oiler batters he faced to end the game, as the home team couldn't figure out the reliever's breaking stuff.

The win on Friday evening pushes Marquette to 17-11 on the baseball season. They travel to Hillsboro on Monday to face a struggling Hiltoppers team, one of four games the Explorers play next week to round out their season.

The Oilers fall to 5-20, but Nick Dorsey is more optimistic about his team day-by-day.

"Some early mistakes cost us today," said Dorsey. "But we were rallying back and kept battling till the end. I really think we still have our best baseball ahead of us, and I'm looking forward to the regional."

Before regionals, EAWR has non-conference action at home against Dupo on Monday, before closing out their regular season Tuesday at Southwestern.



