

Edwardsville's Blake Burris Makes Return With Alton River Dragons – Former Teammate Drake Westcott Also Joins Club

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
July 13 2023 9:46 PM



ALTON – 2019 Edwardsville High School graduate Blake Burris loved playing baseball near his hometown and played a major role in the success of the Alton River Dragons, a team that won the Prospect League Western Conference a season ago.

So, it seemed a bit of a surprise when he announced that he would be leaving the River Dragons to play in the Northwoods League for the Waterloo (Iowa) Bucks.

He followed former Dragons field manager Darrell Handelsman to the new ball club.

Handelsman left the River Dragons to try and be closer to his family in Minnesota. He also coached the Bucks from 1999-2002, including back-to-back NWL Manager of the Year awards and an NWL Championship in 2002.

Handelsman remains in Iowa, but Burris makes a triumphant return to an organization that certainly missed him.

While away in Iowa, Burris played in 24 games and had 96 at-bats. He batted .313 with 30 hits and 15 RBI.

Former Waterloo Bucks and EHS teammate Drake Westcott, a longtime friend of Burris, jumped ship with his buddy to the Prospect League.

Burris and Westcott were teammates on the 2019 EHS team that went 37-5 en route to a state championship. Westcott led that team with 39 RBI and nine home runs while Burris had 22 RBI and batted .315.

While playing for the Bucks, Westcott batted .215 but still brought in 21 runs and had a team-high two home runs. Like Burris, he also made 24 appearances.

Burris returned to his former team Thursday night at home in a 7-3 loss to the Cape Catfish while Westcott made his debut for the team as the designated hitter.

Burris currently plays for Arkansas State University while Westcott plays for the University of Illinois.

The two look to be the spark that turns around the River Dragons rollercoaster 14-23 season.