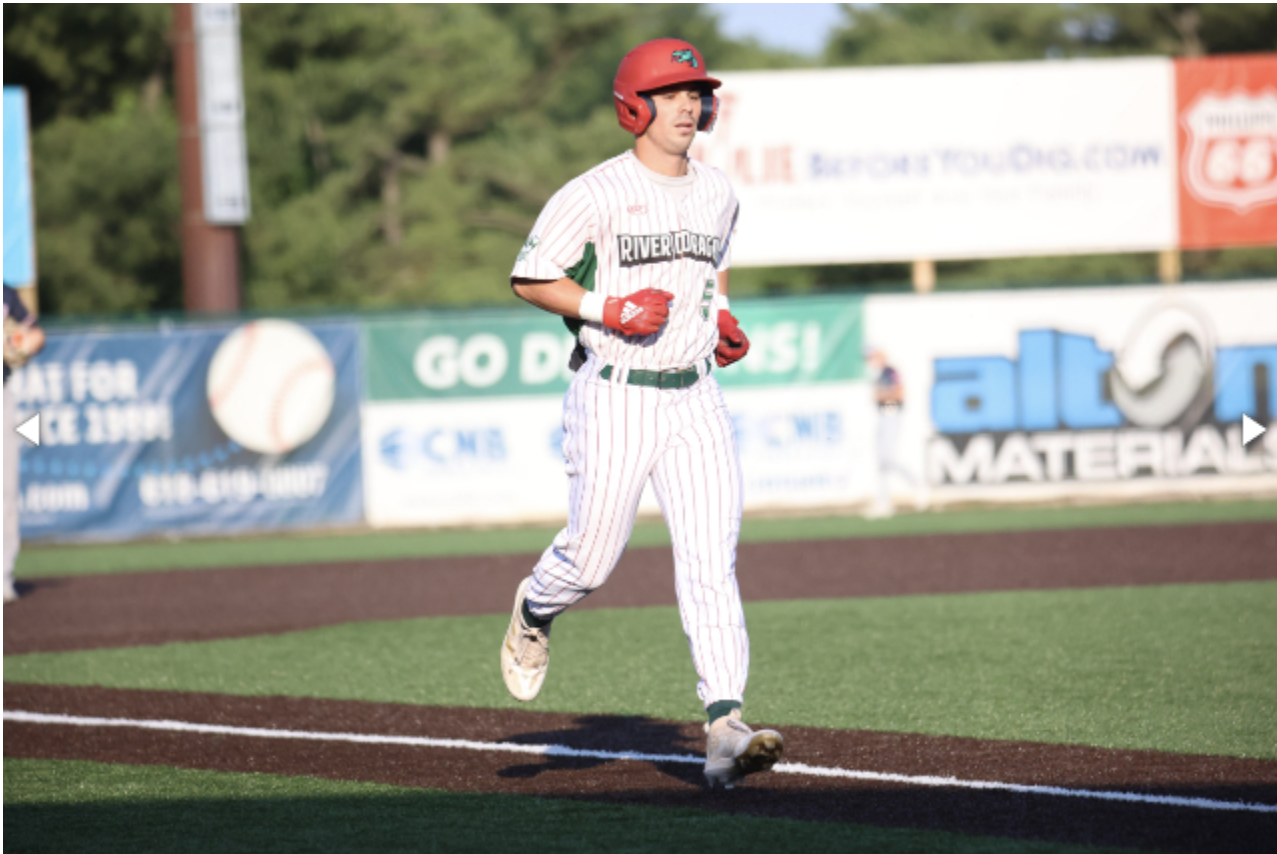




Zupan Slams Three Hits: Four-Run Fifth Inning Allows Catfish To Take 7-3 Win Over River Dragons

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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ALTON - A four-run top of the fifth inning was enough to give the Cape Catfish of Cape Girardeau, Mo. a 7-3 win over the Alton River Dragons in a key Prospect League baseball game played Thursday night at Lloyd Hopkins Field in Gordon Moore Park.

The loss snapped a modest two-game winning streak for the River Dragons, who are now 5-6 in the Prairie Land Division of the league's Western Conference, now a game-and-a-half behind Cape for second place, but remain three-and-a-half games behind the first place Thrillville Thrillbillies of Marion. Alton's overall record is now 14-23.

The River Dragons went out on top in the bottom of the first inning on a RBI double by Bryce Zupan from Civic Memorial, which scored R.J. LaRocco with the game's opening run. Cape then scored the next seven runs unanswered, starting with a third-inning solo homer by Kolten Poorman to tie the game at 1-1, then in the fourth, a two-run homer by Kaden Jeffries gave Cape a 3-1 lead.

A RBI double by Kevin McCarthy and a two-run double off the bat of Brody Chrisman upped the Catfish lead to 6-1 and a RBI ground out to short by Poorman allowed Chrisman to score and make it 7-1 for Cape. In the bottom of the fifth, Edwardsville's Blake Burris, who recently signed with the River Dragons along with another former Tiger, Drake Westcott, scored on a balk and LaRocco singled home Eli Hoerner with the final run as the Catfish took their 7-3 win.

Zupan led the way for Alton with three hits and a RBI, while LaRocco had two hits and a RBI, Bloomer had a pair of hits and both Burris and Evan Evola had a hit apiece. Alex Rodriguez had the start on the mound and was charged with the loss, going four innings, allowing five runs on nine hits, striking out three, with Lucas Johns pitching two innings, giving up two runs on two hits, walking one and fanning two, Luke Gasser also pitched two innings, conceding a hit while walking one and striking out three and Victor Heredia pitched the ninth inning, also allowing a hit while walking one and fanning two.