



Alton Legion Under-15 Baseball Team Sweeps Danville Gold 4-2, 4-0, Comes Back To Win Illinois Championship

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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WHEATON - The Alton under-15 American Legion Post 126 baseball team came back all the way from losing their first game to win the Illinois Legion state junior championship by defeating Danville Post 210 Gold twice, 4-2 and 4-0 in the finals of the state tournament Sunday in Wheaton.

The junior Legionnaires had lost their opener to Jerseyville on Friday, then swept through the loser's bracket, defeating Jerseyville on Saturday 14-0 en route to the finals against Danville, where Alton would have to win twice to clinch the title. Post 126 did so in a pair of close games to win the championship.

In the first game, both teams traded runs in the first inning, with Alton scoring three times in the top of the second to go ahead 4-1, holding Danville scoreless until the bottom of the sixth, pushing across a single run to make it close, but the junior Legionnaires took the 4-2 win to force a second game for the championship.

Alton was held to two hits in the game, but took advantage of five walks and two Danville errors to win, with Danville picking up five hits and Alton committing three errors.

Alex Pilger delivered an RBI triple for the junior Legionnaires, with Blake Rensing having an RBI single for Alton's two hits and Jack Puent also drove home a run. Gavin Ipanis went all the way on the mound, giving up two runs, one earned, on five hits while walking two and striking out two.

It was all Alton in the second game, scoring once in the first, once in the fourth, and twice in the sixth as Danville was held to three hits to give Post 126 the state championship. Both teams committed one error each.

Joe Stephan and Logan Hickman both had two hits for the junior Legionnaires, while Reese Bohlen had a double for his only hit while driving in three runs, Reid Murray and Jacob Flowers also had hits and Puent drove in a run with a bases-loaded walk, as in the first game. Hickman pitched a complete game on the mound, allowing three hits while walking one and fanning three to give Post 126 the championship.

Alton will now represent Illinois in the Great Lakes Regional Tournament to wind up their very successful season. The regional will be held starting Thursday and continuing until next Monday in Valparaiso, Ind.

