

Edwardsville's Drake Westcott Making A Difference Back Home For River Dragons

by Nathan Tucker, Sports Reporter
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ALTON - Drake Westcott has become one of the area's big success stories at the collegiate baseball level. Westcott, an Edwardsville grad who's now playing Big Ten baseball in Champaign, is back home playing baseball, and couldn't be happier.

“This is the most fun I’ve ever had playing summer ball,” said Westcott following Wednesday’s River Dragons game. “I get to spend time with my friends and family, everyone else that’s really close, it’s been such a great experience for me.”

Westcott joined the Alton River Dragons a few weeks ago to close out his summer after a mammoth season for the Illini in Champaign. This spring, Westcott hit .299, with 18 home runs and 47 RBI in just 51 games. His home run and RBI totals led Illinois this season, and he was third on the team in average.

“I love it,” said Westcott of playing baseball at the Big Ten level. “It’s an adrenaline rush going out there every Friday night starting a Big Ten series. “You’re playing in front of thousands of fans, and you’re playing for your school, it’s just an awesome feeling.”

Westcott has carried his firepower to the River Dragons lineup, reaching base 31 times in his first 13 games in River Dragons pinstripes. Coming home was a big sell on him playing summer ball for Dallas Martz’s team, and the team is doing better with Westcott in the offense.

“Pitching has really come through for us,” said Westcott. “But the offense is firing on all cylinders too and I’m glad to be a part of it.”

He gets to play in front of friends and family, and he’s also plying his trade close to his old stomping grounds at Tom Pile Field in Edwardsville, where he was a vital part of a dominant Tiger baseball team.

Westcott credits Edwardsville coach Tim Funkhouser making him the player he is today.

“Coach Funkhouser worked with me every day, and he was hard on me all throughout high school,” said Westcott, with a bit of a smile. “He needed to be hard on me, it’s paid off now. I’m forever grateful for my experience with Edwardsville, and winning the State Championship is something I’ll never forget.”

After his breakout collegiate season at Illinois, now if you Google “Drake Westcott” “Drake Westcott MLB Draft” pops up. Many great ball players continue to come from the Riverbend region, and Drake is no exception.