

# Hoots Scores Seven In First, Take Early 8-0 Lead, Hold Off River Dragons Rally In Wild 14-11 Win

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O'FALLON, Mo. - It was the last meeting of the season between cross-Mississippi River rivals Alton River Dragons and O'Fallon, Mo., Hoots. And both teams ended their season series with a bang.

The Hoots scored seven runs in the bottom of the first, taking an 8-0 lead after two innings, only to see the River Dragons rally back, but in the end, O'Fallon won the Prospect League baseball game 14-11 Wednesday night at CarShield Field in O'Fallon.

The loss was Alton's second straight and dropped the River Dragons to 10-18 in the second half of the league's split season, leaving them in fourth place of the Western Conference Prairie Land Division. The team's overall record is now 19-35.

O'Fallon got off to an explosive start in the opening inning by scoring the first seven runs, and did so in a simple way. Chase Beattie started off the scoring with a grand slam homer over the fence in left field, and Brady Kindhart followed up with a three-run shot over the fence in right-center field to give the Hoots a 7-0 lead. Beattie made it 8-0 in the second with a RBI single to center, scoring Tyler Ferguson, with the River Dragons starting their rally in the top of the third. Metro-East Lutheran's Erik Broekemeier got things started with an infield single to the shortstop to drive in the first run, then a RBI single from Evan Evola scored Edwardsville's Drake Westcott to cut the lead to 8-2. A RBI single by Diego Murillo brought in another run and both Evola and Murillo scored on back-to-back wild pitches to bring Alton to within 8-5.

RBI doubles by Beattie and Zach Beatty brought in three more run for O'Fallon to make it 11-5 in the bottom of the fourth, but in the top of the fifth, Murillo singled home Broekemeier to cut the lead to 11-6. A Ferguson sacrifice fly to left got the run back for the Hoots, but in the sixth, Alton rallied again. It started with Alex Hagen scoring on a passed ball, then Chase Bloomer doubled home Jake O'Steen to make the score 12-8. Eli Hoerner scored on a wild pitch, then an Evola grounder to first scored another run and Murillo reached on an error by the third baseman, scoring Westcott and making the score 12-11 for O'Fallon.

The Hoots got a solo homer from Beattie in the bottom of the eighth and a RBI triple from Jake Vitale to give O'Fallon their 14-11 win.

Murillo had two hits and two RBIs for the River Dragons, with Broekemeier collecting two hits and a RBI, Evola had a hit and two RBIs, Bloomer came up with a hit and drove in a run and Hoerner, Westcott, Kaden Byrne and O'Steen all had hits. Jackson Parrill of Collinsville was the starting pitcher and was charged with the loss, going one inning and giving up seven runs, four earned, on two hits, walking four and striking out one. Luigi Albano-Dito went 2.1 innings and gave up four runs on five hits, walking two and fanning three, Lucas Johns pitched two innings, allowing three runs, two earned, on two hits, walking three and striking out three, Luke Gasser went 1.2 innings, walking two and fanning three and Tyler Greene pitched in the eighth inning, giving up two hits while allowing a walk and striking out three.

The River Dragons enjoy their final day off of the season before heading into their season-ending home-and-home set against the Cape Catfish of Cape Girardeau, Mo., playing the home finale at Lloyd Hopkins Field in Gordon Moore Park Friday night and ending the season with the return game at Capaha Park in Cape Girardeau. Both games start at 6:35 p.m.