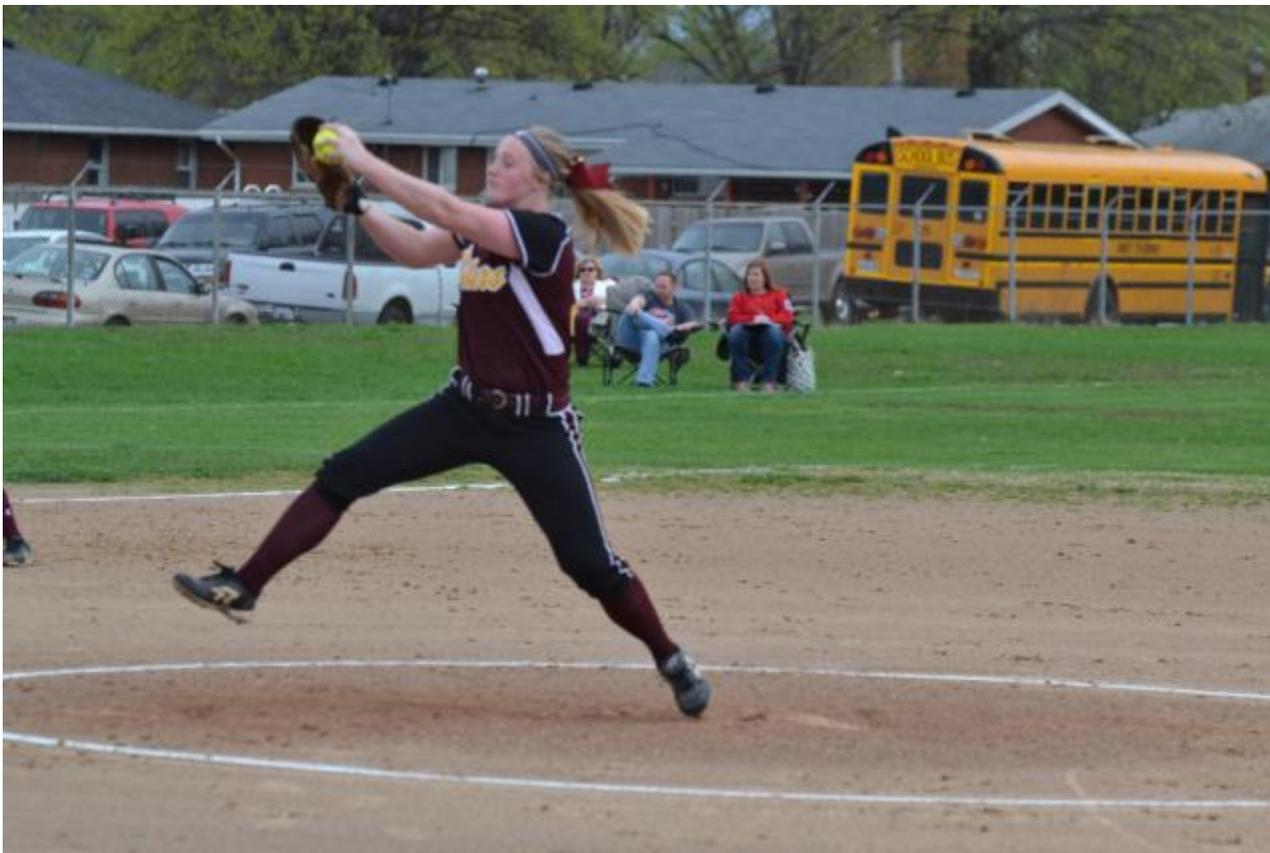


# East Alton-Wood River drops close game to Collinsville

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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There are times when a softball game can turn on just one or two plays.

Collinsville came up with two such plays in their Monday afternoon game at East Alton-Wood River.

First, Alex Holton made a nice running stab of a Heather Martin line drive to left that would have likely scored Carly Campbell in the bottom of the sixth.

Then, in the top of the eighth, Cassidy Smith got ahold of a Victoria Beachum riseball and hammered it deep into center field for a two-run homer and the difference as the Kahoks downed the Oilers 4-2 in a non-conference clash.

“I threw her a riseball and she just got on it,” Beachum said. “She really tomahawked it.”

That Smith got around the Beachum offering may have been an understatement; Smith drove the ball so deep, it almost interfered with a Oiler baseball game that was being played across the way at Norris Dorsey Field.

Both Smith and Beachum have played together in summer club softball, so each was familiar with the other. “Victoria has good command,” Smith said. “She was keeping us off-balance, but we worked around it and strung some hits together.”

“That was a tough game,” said Kahok coach Dan Toberman. “Both teams battled all day long; we had to really grind this one out.

“We knew Beachum would be tough going in, and she was. She was really getting us frustrated at times, but we kept battling and got a big win in the end.”

Collinsville (7-6) grabbed the lead early on as back-to-back doubles from Emily Lautz and Smith brought home a run and a 1-0 Kahok lead. The Oilers (5-9) nearly countered the Kahok run in the second when Campbell led off with a walk off Kahok pitcher Caite Brombolich and, with two out, Courtney Beneke singled to put two on. Brombolich got Kari Westbrook to fly out to center to end the threat and keep it 1-0.

Beachum, for her part, found her groove and retired 11 of the next 12 Kahok hitters she faced, giving up only a double to Becky Gibbs to keep the lead at 1-0. In the bottom of the fourth, Campbell singled with one out and Emme Flanagan reached base on a fielder's choice.

Campbell, though was called safe but apparently thought she was out, walking away from the base. Collinsville thought Campbell was out as well until they realized she hadn't been forced. In the confusion, Campbell reached third to put runners at the corners. Martin then grounded to second but scored Campbell and Beneke singled home Beneke to put the Oilers ahead 2-1.

It stayed that way until the top of the sixth when Holton singled and stole second. Sami Reuther then singled home Holten to tie proceedings up at 2-2. The Oilers had a chance to take the lead in the sixth when Campbell singled but Holten made a nice running stab of a Martin liner to left to keep it tied up.

“That was a great catch,” said Oiler coach Dana Emerick. “We should have won the game right there, but tip your hat to them, they battled us all day”

The Oilers had another chance in the bottom of the seventh when Beneke reached on an error and Westbrook sacrificed, but Beneke reached second safely. Peyton Young then sacrificed both runners over and Haley Shewmake drew a walk to load the bases. But Brombolich got Morgan Moxey to hit an infield fly to third and Beachum to ground back to the box to keep it tied.

Emily Lautz then singled to open the eighth and brought up Smith, who knocked the first pitch she saw from Beachum into deep center for the home run and a 4-2 Kahok lead. Brombolich then gave up one-out singles to Flanagan and Martin, but got Flanagan on a fielder's choice and Westbrook on a foul to third to end the game.

Lautz led the Kahoks with a 2-for-4 day with two runs scored and Smith was also 2-for-4 with the home run, three RBIs and a run scored. Holten had a run scored and Reuther had the other RBI. Campbell was 2-for-3 a run scored and Flanagan was 1-for-4 with a run scored; Martin and Beneke both had RBIs.

Beachum went the distance, giving up seven hits and walking one while striking out 13; Brombolich also threw all eight innings, giving up six hits and walking two while fanning five.

