

Hudson moves to top of Alton pitchers list for most wins; Alton wins two

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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Bryan Hudson has had quite a bit of attention paid to him since Alton's baseball season got started about a month ago.

Saturday afternoon, Hudson added another reason for fans to follow him as he won his 21st game in a Redbird uniform, moving into first place among AHS' all-time baseball win leaders.

But the Redbirds aren't just Hudson's pitching prowess; they have some pretty good hitters and they make some plays on defense, and all of those were on display during Alton's 10-0 and 12-2 doubleheader sweep of a pretty good Piasa Southwestern team at Lloyd Hopkins Field at Gordon Moore Park. Both games went six innings because of the 10-run rule.

“We just came out and played our game today against a quality opponent,” said Redbird coach Todd Haug. “I was pretty happy with our offense today; we swung the bats pretty well. The bottom part of our lineup really did great; they had been pressing some recently, so it was good to see them break out.

“If we can get everyone hitting like we did today the rest of the season, we're going to be a pretty dangerous team come the postseason.”

The Piasa Birds themselves haven't been too bad this season, but the main reason they took on the Redbirds is to see where they stood against a much bigger school.

“They're good, no doubt,” said Bird coach Brian Hanslow. “We saw Hudson pitch against us last year to, so we knew going in how good he is, but early on, we did get to him. We had some really good at-bats and if we can cut down on a few mistakes, who knows what could have happened?

“We play Alton, which is a much bigger school than we are (the Redbirds of the Southwestern Conference are a IHSA Class 4A school; the Piasa Birds of the South Central Conference are a Class 2A school), because it gives us a chance to see where we stand and what we need to work on before the postseason starts. We'll take a look at what we need to fix and learn from whatever mistakes we made today; it'll make us a better team the rest of the season.”

That the Piasa Birds seemingly got to Hudson early came right away; with one out in the top of the first of the opener, Alex Baldwin singled sharply and Blake Lawson doubled to right-center to put runners at second and third, but Hudson got out of the jam by striking out Scott Kasting and Cody Roberts. Hudson, in fact struck out six straight batters before giving up a two-out double to Baldwin in the third before getting Lawson to fly out to left to end the third; in all, Hudson struck out seven Birds before being lifted for Jacob St. Peters to start the fourth.

In the bottom of the first, Derrick Allen opened with a double and Steven Nguyen walked before Jacob Kanallakan was issued a one-out walk to load the bases. One out later, Aaron Bonnell walked and Allen scored to put the Redbirds up 1-0. In the AHS

half of the third, they extended the lead to 4-0 when Hudson stroked a two-run single to score Matt Hopkins and Jacob Skarbacz and Kanallakan grounded out to bring in Nguyen.

Three more runs came in in the fourth when Allen scored on a series of walks and Drake Hampton drove in Hudson and Kanallakan with a single for a 7-0 lead. In the fifth, Kanallakan plated Skarbacz with a single and in the sixth, Hopkins brought home Bonnell and Hampton with a single to bring Game 1 to an end.

Southwestern grabbed an early lead in the nightcap when Baldwin singled in Zach Seymour, who had walked and stole second, in the top of the first. Alton countered with four runs in their half of the inning, highlighted by a two-run Bonnell triple that brought home Nguyen and Kanallakan. In the home half of the fifth, Alton scored five times, highlighted by doubles by Hudson, Hopkins and Hampton, before the Piasa Birds scored another run in the fifth to keep the game going. Alton, though scored twice on a series of wild pitches and passed balls to bring the game to an end.

The Redbirds travel to Edwardsville's Tom Pile Field for a 4:30 p.m. Tuesday game against the Tigers in what should have implications for the outcome of the SWC race.



