

# Marquette nips East Alton-Wood River 8-4 in closely matched softball game

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April 28 2015 5:40 AM



For four-and-a-half innings anyway, a matchup of two of the area's top softball pitchers was living up to some high expectations.

Until Marquette's offense exploded against East Alton-Wood River in the bottom of the fifth and scored six runs. The Explorers eventually downed the Oilers 8-4 at Gordon Moore Park Monday afternoon.



In addition to the loss, two of EA-WR's best players – Beachum and center fielder Morgan Moxey – left the game because of injury, Moxey with what was being called a lower-body injury in the fourth and Beachum after being hit by a Explorer freshman Meghan Schorman pitch on the right elbow (her non-throwing elbow) in the sixth.

The injuries weren't why the Oilers fell to 9-15 on the season, at least in Dana Emerick's eyes. “We've had 21 errors in our last four games,” the EA-WR coach said. “It's a lack of concentration. That's the only message I had for the girls after the game. We've got to play better defense than what we've have. These are girls who play summer ball, year-round ball; we can't make these mistakes.”

The Explorers, on the other hand, have been on a hot streak; they took their record to 17-4 on the year with the win and it's been Marquette's ability to come from behind that has helped.

“The kids are playing pretty well,” said Explorer coach Dan Wiedman. “Both pitchers were throwing pretty well today and it was a pretty good game. We just had that one big inning and that was the difference.”

The Oilers got on the board in their half of the first, with Haley Shewmake singling and stealing second, with Emme Flanagan delivering a two-out single to bring home Shewmake and give the Oilers an early 1-0 lead.

Beachum herself was keeping Marquette off-balance early on, allowing just two baserunners in the first three innings on an error and a single. The Explorers touched Beachum for a pair of runs in the fourth, however, as doubles by Sam Harshbarger, Schorman and Grace Frost gave Marquette a 2-1 lead through four.

Schorman was cruising along as well after the first, shutting down the Oiler attack and keeping the game close. The Explorers then broke the game wide open in the fifth, starting with a walk to Megan McClard, a throwing error on a sacrifice that allowed Emma Taylor to get aboard and a single from Tess Eberlin that loaded up the bases. A Harshbarger single and a Megan Witter sacrifice fly to center brought in two runs, then singles from Schorman and Frost brought home another two runs before a Emily Schabel single and a McClard single brought home two more runs to break it wide open in Marquette's favor.

Beachum's injury came leading off the top of the sixth, when an errant Schorman pitch struck her. Beachum went to first but was quickly taken out of the game. Two outs later, Courtney Beneke was hit by a pitch, putting runners at first and second for Heather Martin, who stroked a single to bring home a run. Kaleigh Young then stepped up and doubled home two more runs to pull the Oilers to 8-4, but Schorman got Peyton Young to ground to short to end the threat.

Kaleigh Young stepped in for Beachum and retired the side in order in the bottom of the sixth, but Schorman struck out the side after giving up a single to Kari Westbrook to end the game.

Both sides return to action Wednesday, the Explorers traveling to Nokomis while the Oilers are at Piasa Southwestern.

