

Alton's bats explode in fifth inning to topple Granite City 19-6

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
May 8 2015 5:20 AM



Once Alton's bats get going, they can be pretty difficult to stop.

Granite City can attest to that.

The Redbirds, who trailed twice in the game, took the lead back in the fifth inning with a three-run burst, then sent 10 men to the plate in the sixth and seventh, scoring six times in each inning, to take a 19-6 Southwestern Conference win over the Warriors Thursday at Babe Champion Field.

“I was really proud of the effort today,” said Redbird coach Todd Haug. “This isn't an easy place to play as a visiting team; you have to be ready for anything here and be ready to play.”

The Redbirds' Drake Hampton swung the biggest stick on the day; he was 4-for-5 with five RBIs and three runs scored, including a two-run double in the fifth and a two-run triple in the sixth that helped break the game wide-open.

“Drake was outstanding today,” Haug said.

The sixth and seventh innings for the Warriors was kind of symbolic of how their season has gone; Granite held leads after the first and fourth innings but gave up 15 runs the final three innings. “Alton's a good-hitting club,” said GCHS coach Scott Smallie.

“There's no easy outs up and down the lineup; their sixth and seventh hitters really take a good approach to their at-bats, and once the shoe dropped, it was hard to stop them.

“Once one or two guys got hits, it snowballed on us. Hitting's contagious; once someone gets started, it can get up and down the lineup. That's baseball for you.”

Alton broke on top early, getting a run when Jacob Kanallakan singled in Derrick Allen for a 1-0 lead in the first, but the Warriors countered with a pair of runs in the home half of the first when Gabe Jarman singled in D.J. Miller and David Pulley hit a sacrifice fly to score Bruce Drennan. The Redbirds bounced right back when Allen singled home Matt Hopkins and Hampton to put Alton back on top at 3-1.

Alton scored again in the fourth when Allen hit a sacrifice fly to center to score Hampton, who opened the inning with a single, to make it 4-2. The Warriors bounced back in the bottom of the inning when, with two out, Carter Hall and Miller reached on errors and Drennan singled home Hall to cut the lead to 4-3. Ryan Steen then stroked a triple to the deepest part of the park to score Miller and Drennan to give Granite the lead back at 5-4.

Alton grabbed the lead back right away, starting with walks to Kanallakan, Aaron Bonnell and Hopkins. A Hampton two-run double gave the Redbirds the lead back, and a Brendan Phillips groundout to short brought home another run. The floodgates finally opened up in the sixth when Alton scored six times, the big blow coming from

Hampton, who had a two-run triple; Bryan Hudson also had a RBI double in the inning to help get the ball rolling.

Six more runs came in in the seventh, with Hudson stroking a RBI double, Bonnell a two-run triple and Phillips a RBI double. But the highlight was Carlos Anderson coming in as a pinch-hitter and stroking a RBI single to bring in Phillips to end the Redbird scoring. Pulley hit a RBI single to score Drennan in the bottom of the seventh for a consolation run for the Warriors.

The Redbirds host East St. Louis at 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, then travel to Belleville West for a 4:30 p.m. Thursday clash.



