

# Dupo nips East Alton-Wood River 1-0 in regional title game

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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In the end, it was one simple base hit that eliminated East Alton-Wood River's softball team.

One hit from Dupo's Rachael Donald that brought home Alyssa Strubberg and gave the Tigers a 1-0, eight-inning win over the Oilers in the IHSA Class 2A Roxana Regional final Saturday afternoon at Roxana Community Park.

And though the Oilers fell in their quest for the school's first-ever regional softball title, they had much to look at, considering where they came from.

“When it comes down to it, we did all we could,” said Oiler coach Dana Emerick after the game. “We didn't want (Brown, the Tigers' top hitter) to swing the bat. We knew what she could do and we put our best out there.”

That hit came off senior pitcher Tori Beachum, who ended her high school career as one of the top pitchers in Oiler history; Emerick was full of praise of her.

“Tori's Tori,” Emerick said. “She's had a great career here. Once she gets to (Southern Illinois-Edwardsville) next year, she's going to learn a lot about pitching, and with an outstanding defense behind her, she's going to be great.”

Beachum gave up just five hits and struck out 10 in going the distance, and said “I think that's the best I've pitched” afterwards.

“It's hard to lose, but I've got no complaints,” Beachum said. “On the pitch (Brown) hit, I tip my hat to her; she just stuck the bat out and got enough of it.”

Beachum said the game reflected the nature of the Oilers – a team of hard workers and high character. “We've fought back from a lot of adversity,” Beachum said. “There's a lot of character on this team; we grew as a team and I will never forget the experiences we had this year.”

Both Beachum and Dupo pitcher Jessica Stansch battled each other pitch for pitch all day; until the sixth, no runner got past second base. The closest the Tigers got was when Savannah Maldonado got to second after walking and being sacrificed to second in the third, while the Oilers got Courtney Beneke and Kari Westbrook to second and first respectively in the second.

Defensive sparklers were part of the day's theme; Brown was robbed twice by nice catches by Oiler left fielder Katie Hall in the first and fourth innings. The Oilers finally seemed ready to break through when Morgan Moxey opened the sixth by being hit by a Stansch pitch and was sacrificed to second on a Haley Shewmake bunt. Beachum then grounded to second to send Moxey to third to give EA-WR a huge chance, but Emme Flanagan fouled out on a big catch in traffic by Maldonado.

Dupo themselves got Beachum in a huge jam in the bottom of the sixth when Caitlyn Brizzi opened with a single and went to second when Hall overran the ball. Beachum got Strubberg with a big strikeout, but Brown reached base when Shewmake was handcuffed on a ground ball to put runners on first and third. Beachum reared back and fanned Donald looking for the second out, then got Taylor Esmon to ground to first to end the threat.

The Tigers had a chance in the bottom of the seventh as well when Skylure Barlow singled to open the inning, but Beachum got Stormy Sellers to foul out to first, then got Mallory Koonce to ground into an inning-ending double play.

EA-WR had a big chance in the eighth when, with two out, Moxey launched a triple into left-center, but Stanch got Shewmake to pop out to first to end the inning. In the bottom of the eighth, Beachum struck out Maldonado looking and got Brizzi to ground to third, but Strubburg reached on a throwing error and Brown walked to put runners on first and second when Donald ended the game on a single to right-center.

The Tigers, who will take on Pleasant Plains, 5-0 winners over Springfield Calvary in the Auburn Regional final Saturday in the Williamsville Sectional semifinals next week, took their record to 21-7; the Oilers were eliminated with a 17-20 mark.



