

Stilts Allows One Hit, Fans Nine While Phillips, Brooks Drive In Runs As Redbirds Blank Lancers 3-0, Meet Tigers In Regional Final

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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ALTON – Adam Stilts gave up only one hit while striking out nine, and Riley Phillips and Jackson Brooks drove home runs as Alton shut out Belleville East 3-0 in the second semifinal of the IHSA Class 4A regional baseball tournament Thursday afternoon at Redbird Field.

Alton advances to Saturday morning's final, where the Redbirds will face Edwardsville, an 11-1 winner over Quincy in Wednesday's first semifinal. The Alton-Edwardsville regional title matchup begins at 10 a.m. at Alton High School and will be live on Riverbender.com.

It was a great all-around performance by the Redbirds as a team, and head coach Scott Harper was very satisfied with the outcome.

"I'm just pleased with, obviously, the outcome," Harper said, "and we played all three phases of the game well. We got great pitching, solid, defense and the timely hitting."

Stilts pitched a great game, allowing just the one hit in throwing the complete game win for Alton.

“Adam was excellent,” Harper said. a “He had a real good command of things, and everything was working for him, his fastball, his change, and his curve. It was a really good performance.”

The Redbirds scored their first run in the top of the second inning, as Stilts led off with a walk, then courtesy runner Nathan Lemons stole second, went to third on a passed ball and then scored on a wild pitch with two out to give the Redbirds a 1-0 lead. Gage Cruz then led off the home half with a single to right, the only hit that Stilts would give up on the day, as he retired the side in order after that, getting two strikeouts in the inning to keep the score 1-0.

Meanwhile, Lancer pitcher Evan Gray was also throwing well for East, giving up a run and a hit in four innings of work while striking out five. Gray gave way to Gabe Tindall in the fifth and set Alton down in order in the fifth, but in the sixth, the Redbirds got some insurance. Robby Taul led off with an infield single to third, and then, with the count at one ball, Phillips got a hold of a delivery and tripled over the center fielder's head to score Taul and make it 2-0. Brooks then delivered a sacrifice fly to center to score Phillips, making it 3-0 for Alton.

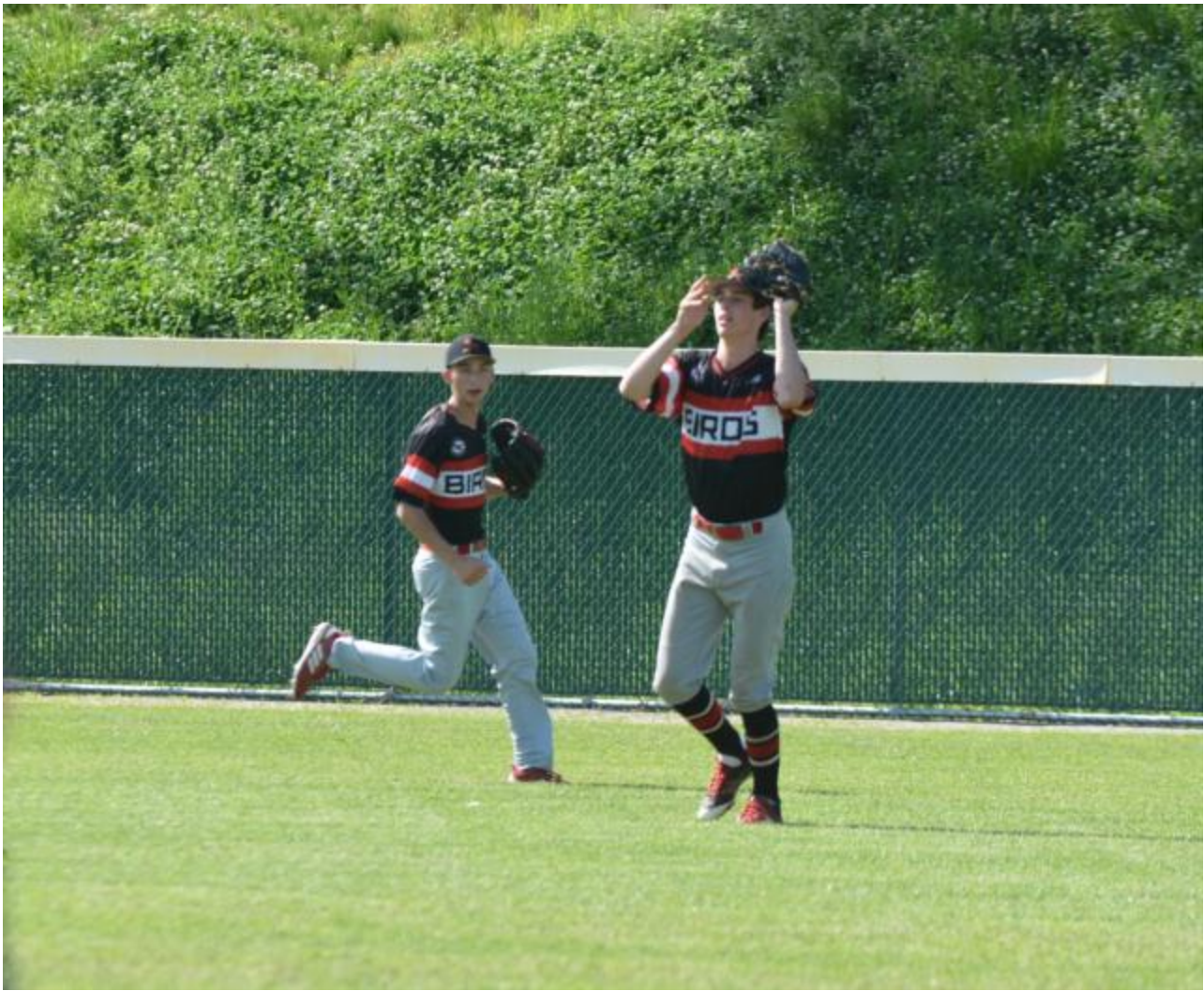
The Redbirds kept the inning alive with a Stilts base a hit and stolen base, while Dylan Lahue was hit by a pitch to put runners on second and third, but a ground out to third ended the inning.

Stilts then retired six of the final seven batters, allowing only one baserunner on a hit batsman in the sixth, striking out two as Alton went on to the 3-0 win to advance.

The Lancers' season ends at 18-18, while the Redbirds improve to 14-18 and will face the Tigers in the regional final at 10 a.m., moved up an hour due to Edwardsville's graduation ceremonies scheduled for 3 p.m. that afternoon. Harper is looking forward to the matchup, and he knows how important each game is.

“When you get to the postseason, it's more magnified because with the potential of one loss, and the season's done,” Harper said. “So we'll just play our best, and that's what we'll do on Saturday.”





[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)