

Led By Blake Burris, River Dragons Rally For Four in Bottom Of Eighth, For 9-7 Win Over Lumberkings

by Randy Manning
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ALTON - The Alton River Dragons gave up three runs each in the top of the seventh and eighth innings, but rallied in the home half of the eighth with four runs, keyed by a two-run double by Edwardsville's Blake Burris, to defeat the Clinton, Ia., Lumberkings 9-7 in a Prospect League baseball game played Wednesday night at Lloyd Hopkins Field at Gordon Moore Park in Alton.

The win, coming at the start of a three-game home stand for the River Dragons, ended a modest three-game losing streak and improved Alton to 9-5, 7-3 in the Western Conference of the league.

The River Dragons jumped out to a 4-0 lead with a pair of runs in the first and solo tallies in both the third and fourth innings, with both teams trading runs in the fifth to make the score 5-1. Clinton then scored three times in both the top of the seventh and eighth innings to go on top 7-5, but Alton came right back with four runs in the bottom of the eighth, with the two-run double by Burris and RBI singles by Noah Bush and Ben Gallaher to give the River Dragons their 9-7 win.

Marcus Huesohn led Alton with four hits and an RBI, while Gallaher had two hits and drove in three runs, Burris and Bush each had two hits and two RBIs, Robby Taul of Alton had a pair of hits, Blake Stenger had a hit and RBI and Eddie King, Alec Nigut and Chris Andrews each had a hit apiece.

Justin Needles went six innings on the mound, striking out three, while winner Matthew Romero also fanned three and Bush struck out one to gain the save.

The River Dragons continue the home stand Thursday night with a game against the defending Prospect League champions Cape Catfish of Cape Girardeau, Mo., in a 6:35 p.m. first pitch, then go against the Springfield Lucky Horseshoes in a home-and-home set, with the opening game Friday night at Lloyd Hopkins Field at 6:35 p.m. and a return match at Robin Roberts Stadium at Springfield's Lanphier Park, with a 6:30 p.m. start time.

Alton plays both Sunday and Monday at Clinton.



