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By Paul Johnson - Beacon-News

BASEBALL

Just a hot second

Playing second base and batting No. 2, Bartlett junior Swalley is on a tear



Bartlett's Colin Swalley hits a double to center field against East Aurora during an Upstate Eight Conference game in Bartlett on Wednesday. Jon Langham/Beacon-News

Batting second in the order for **Bartlett**, **junior second baseman Colin Swalley** has to be willing — and able — to do a number of different things to help out his teammates.

Whether it's working a count to show the opposing pitcher's arsenal, hitting behind a runner or producing a bunt, Swalley realizes that he needs to be adaptable to the

situation.

Swalley has been embracing that role. And even changing his mindset to fill it properly.

“I’m just trying to stay to the opposite field,” he said. “I always used to be a pull hitter, but now I really focus on trying to drive it where the ball is pitched and finding gaps.”

After a slow start, Swalley has been starting to string things together. He had his second straight strong game in Wednesday’s 17-2 Upstate Eight Conference win over East Aurora.

Swalley was 3-for-3 and got hit by a pitch for **Bartlett** (4-8, 3-1). He stole a base, scored twice and drove in a run, following a 2-for-3, two-RBI effort Tuesday against West Chicago.

Dylan Scott (2-1) tossed three innings for the win. Freshman outfielder Josh Colaizzi went 4-for-4 with two runs and an RBI. Mario Prieto had three RBIs. Jack Sharko hit a solo homer.

For East Aurora (1-8, 1-4), Andres Cabral doubled in Rafael Vazquez and Axel Garcia for the only two runs. The game went four innings.

Bartlett coach Chris Baum, meanwhile, has a specific idea of what he wants in a No. 2 hitter. And Swalley has been fitting the bill so far.

“You want a guy that can handle the bat, and he can go the other way to start getting guys in motion,” Baum said. “If we need him to bunt, he can bunt. If he needs to hit behind the runner, he can hit behind the runner.

“That’s what you really want out of a two hitter — someone who is confident with the bat and can put the ball where it needs to be.”

The red-hot Swalley now leads the **Hawks** with a .440 batting average. He has scored five runs with four RBIs and two steals. He has a double and a triple, which he had Wednesday.

“I’m feeling like I’m playing how I should play,” Swalley said. “I had a bumpy start, but I’m getting back into the groove.”

The **Hawks** batted around in the second, third and fourth innings to blow open Wednesday’s game.

That was more than enough for Scott, who worked the first three innings before leaving to preserve his pitch count.

Scott allowed two runs on two hits, striking out seven and walking two.

“We want to make sure he’s still available later in the week,” Baum said. “Dylan is a competitor, like all these guys, and they want to be in as long as possible.

“It was just making a team call.”

Scott, who is recovering from a torn ACL that cost him his junior season, was hoping to be a key contributor this spring on the mound.

He has been exactly that in the early going.

“I came into the season with the expectation to be the best,” Scott said.

After going through a seven-game losing streak, which included a four-game trip to Tennessee, young **Bartlett** is starting to round into form.

The **Hawks** are 3-1 in their last four games.

“I think one thing we really learned about ourselves is that we can hang with really good teams,” Baum said. “We just have to be able to play all 21 outs. I think that’s the big difference.”

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