

Athlete Spotlight: Maurice Edwards plays key for Alton's basketball success this season

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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ALTON – **Maurice Edwards** played a key role in Alton's big Southwestern Conference recent win over Belleville, but still thinks he can still make a bigger contribution to the Redbirds.

That even after Edwards and Marcus Latham combined for eight of the Redbirds' 10 three-point baskets in a 75-58 win over the Maroons. Edwards had a team-high 25 points in the win. The Redbirds lost to Edwardsville on Friday night and now stand 8-6 overall, 5-2 in the SWC. A scheduled Tuesday night home game against East St. Louis was postponed to Feb. 9 following the shooting death of an 11-year-old boy in Alton Monday evening.

“I feel like I haven't been playing to my full potential,” Edwards said after the Belleville West game. “I haven't been playing aggressive enough to help out team out,” said after the Belleville West game. However, he continues to shine in the stat books as the season develops.

The Redbirds' aggressive approach to the game led to a good number of Maroon turnovers, which is what Alton wanted to accomplish. The Redbirds knew they couldn't let their big man (Tyler Dancy) control the game and had to force their guards to play fast, Edwards acknowledged.

Against Belleville West, Alton coach Eric Smith said the key was challenging the Maroons and ultimately wearing them down.

"Belleville West had to come down the floor quite a bit," Smith said. "Offensively, one of the emphasis was that, make or miss, the ball's got to get to the other end of the floor as quickly as possible, and I thought that was the key against Belleville West, that we got a lot of easy baskets throwing the ball ahead. We got a lot of opportunities against Belleville West; I thought we put a lot of pressure on them just with the pace and tempo of the game.”

Edwards has high hopes for the Redbirds through the remainder of the season and wants to see the team get everything completely in gear.

“We've got to get back to playing how we played early in the year,” Edwards said.

Edwards has averaged over 14 points a game for the Redbirds this season. A junior, he is the lone returning starter from last season's 27-5 team. He broke out for 20 and 23 points in the two games against Belleville East and West.

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