

# MELHS slips by Alton in boys volleyball match in battle of two with third-year programs

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer  
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**EDWARDSVILLE** – Both **Metro East Lutheran's** and **Alton's boys volleyball programs** are in their third year.

That being said, the Knights have players who have experience playing volleyball; Alton's volleyball players are, for the most part, still learning the game.

That difference in experience may have been a factor as the Knights swept the Redbirds 25-14, 25-16 in a non-conference match Tuesday evening at MEL's Hooks Gym.

“We have only one returning starter” from last year's Redbirds, said AHS coach Daniel Campbell. “We have a couple who returned who played last year, but we have one true starter that returned; I have a freshman I (put) out there at the last minute, a second who did very well for me, there are a couple of sophomores out there who are playing.

“We're just a young, raw team, which I'm OK with. The varsity may struggle a little bit this year, but we're so young, I'm looking for the near-future.”

That's not to say everything didn't go well for the Redbirds. “We had some positive notes; we were talking and moving,” Campbell said, “we started hitting, we started blocking. I think you'll see more progression throughout the season.”

“This is our third year for the program,” said **Knight coach Jason Batty**. “They've (the Knights) started as freshmen and sophomores and they've been together for the past three years. They're coming together.

“The experience helps; they've gotten used to each other, knew their little ins and outs and things like that. We've jelled a lot quicker than we have in the past.”

**The Knights' AJ Risavy** has played a key role for MEL in the setter role; he's become a team leader and sort of a coach on the floor. “He plays hard, he knows the game; he's an asset. It's nice to have a general out there who can take charge.”

Batty believes the Knights look strong, even though they took a three-game win at Granite City the night before in their season-opener. “We look strong,” Batty said. “We started off a little sluggish, but we picked it up in the second and third game against Granite City.

“I think we're starting to find our groove now; I don't think we've hit it full yet, but I think we're starting to get into it.”



**Risavy** had **18** assists for the Knights, with **Nathaniel Partelow** scoring five kills, **Braden Woolsey** three kills, **Stephen Korte** nine digs and three aces on serve on the night. The Knights are off until Monday, when they travel to south St. Louis County for a match at Mehlville.

