



# Collinsville too much for Redbirds in boys soccer regional

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer  
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**GRANITE CITY – Collinsville and Alton** had met just a few days earlier in a boys soccer match that gave the Kahoks the **Southwestern Conference championship**.

The Kahoks came away with a 4-0 win, with all their goals coming in the second half.

The two teams met again Tuesday night at Granite City's Gene Baker Field in a semifinal match of the IHSA Class 3A Granite City Regional.

Things didn't go that much differently this time around, the Kahoks getting two goals in each half to eliminate the Redbirds 4-1; the Kahoks advanced to Friday evening's regional final against Edwardsville (see related story), which gets under way at 5 p.m.; the winner advances to next week's Peoria Notre Dame Sectional against the O'Fallon Regional winner.

The Redbirds were eliminated at 14-6-2 for the season, while the Kahoks advanced at 10-7-2.

“They came out hot in the second half, like we have all year,” said **Redbird coach Nick Funk**. “We were plagued with injuries the last few games; it's hard to overcome stuff like that when you have three seniors go down the week before the playoffs.

“I'm proud of them; they played hard. A few mental errors is where we gave up goals. I think the first two were on dead balls.”

“That was huge,” **Kahok coach Clay Smith** said of a 39th-minute goal from Zane Baker that gave Collinsville a 2-0 lead going into halftime. “For any team scoring late, especially in the last minute of the half and the way we did it, that's a big-time goal. Credit them for coming out tremendously after giving up that second goal. They changed their formation a little bit and they attacked a little bit more and they were winning balls.”

Smith was referring to a free kick from some 25-30 yards from goal in the 47<sup>th</sup> minute that C.J. Nasello struck beat Kahok goalkeeper Brent Niedzwiecki to cut the Kahok lead to 2-1. “Nasello – that's a great dead ball,” Smith said. “That's an all-state keeper and he couldn't get a hand on it; that's a great shot.”

“C.J. hit a great shot there,” Funk said. “To beat Niedzwiecki from that far away, that's not an easy task; that's an all-state goalie. Good thing for C.J. that he hit it like that.”

Hunter Counton had given Collinsville the lead in the 28<sup>th</sup> minute when he took a pass from Zach Cawvey and scored, then Baker's late goal put the Kahoks ahead 2-0 and seemingly gave them some momentum heading into the break.

Nasello's free-kick laser cut the lead to 2-1, but Collinsville regained the two-goal lead in the 61<sup>st</sup> minute when Sabas Avalos scored; a Josh Wobbe goal in the 75<sup>th</sup> minute put the match on ice for the Kahoks and send them to Friday evening's final.