

Alton-Edwardsville hockey teams, fans remember Zack Hunter in pre-game ceremony

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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EAST ALTON – Zack Hunter was an important part of the **Alton High School hockey team**.

Hunter, who died April 17 of injuries he suffered in an accident in Jersey County April 1, played a key role on both the hockey Redbirds and on the Marquette Catholic boys tennis team (Marquette and Alton play as a combined team in the Mississippi Valley Club Hockey Association competition).

Prior to Wednesday night's season-opening game between the **Redbirds and Edwardsville** at East Alton Ice Arena, Hunter was remembered with a moment of silence and a ceremonial opening faceoff involving his family, **his father Scott, mother Sara and sisters Sophie and Aubrey**.

Many Alton supporters wore t-shirts with Hunter's number, 77, on them as well as shirts remembering Zack, and a banner displayed behind Alton's bench had Hunter's No. 77 jersey on it; the Redbirds will be wearing memorial patches and helmet stickers this season to remember his contributions to the Redbirds and to the game.

“He was a very special hockey player; he loved to play,” said **Hunter's father Scott**. “It was a big part of his life. He liked to play for Marquette, then we merged with Alton. He wanted to come to every game; it's nice to be back at the ice rink.

“It was his home all year around; there's hockey all the time in our family. I miss watching him play hockey every day and seeing the skills he developed. I have very special memories; I replay them over and over all the time.”

“It's hard to prepare for something when you're still recovering from the huge loss of last season,” said **Redbird coach Steven Campbell**. “We really can't replace Zack's skills; it's tough.”

“There's a lot of guys in that locker room who played with him,” said **Edwardsville coach Jason Walker**. “It was a very nice ceremony and something that's been on our of all minds this whole off-season.

“You have these guys who all grow up together and play pickup hockey together; we're all on the same team when it comes to things like this.”

“All the boys are wearing my boy's number on their helmets and their jerseys; it'll be a season of remembrance here,” Scott Hunter said. “It's cool to see them honoring him that way. It means a lot to us.”

