

Maurice Edwards has big game, Alton tops Riverview Gardens in Tip-Off Classic opener

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
November 24 2016 11:58 AM



ALTON – **Alton** got out of the gates pretty quick Wednesday night in their season-opening game at home against **Riverview Gardens**.

The momentum from the fast start helped push the Redbirds past the Rams 67-54 as the **Alton Tip-Off Classic** round-robin tournament got under way.

The Redbirds went to 1-0 on the season with the win and will take on Carnahan High of south St. Louis city at 7:30 p.m. Friday, then finish the tournament with a game against St. Mary's, also a South Side school, at 7:30 p.m. Saturday.

“We came out pretty quick at the beginning,” said **Redbird coach Eric Smith**. “The kids had a lot of energy for obvious reasons – first game of the year, there was a little bit of excitement and they came out and smacked them in the mouth.

“We have to find a way to keep up our intensity and our focus throughout the whole game.”

Smith saw some bright spots throughout the game. “There was some good stuff we did,” Smith said. “We're pretty pleased with some things that some of our kids did, but obviously, there's some stuff we need to work on and do a little bit better at, but at least we've got a starting point and we know what we need to work on.”

Senior Maurice Edwards led the way with a 15-point opening term and ended with 27 points on the night, but it was the guard play of the Redbirds that stood out to Smith. “We've got some kids we can put on the floor and do some stuff, Smith said of his guards, Edwards, Ty'ohn Taylor and Kevin Caldwell. “As we get a little better with our decision making and get a little bit into better shape so we can play harder for longer periods.

“We've got three kids who that have had varsity experience who played quite a bit last year and are back, that'll be one of the things that helps us out a little bit.”

The Redbirds got off to a big start, with Edwards leading the way, much to the delight of the Alton faithful; he came out and hit shots from over the floor, including a dunk that drew a loud cheer from the Redbird fans as Alton got out to a 20-4 quarter-time lead. Alton held the lead going into the long break at 31-15, then went to work in the second half, getting baskets from Edwards and Caldwell – highlighted by another Edwards dunk - to expand the lead to 54-35 at three-quarter time.

The Rams tried to make a move on the Redbirds in the final quarter, but Alton had the answers every time Riverview seemed ready to make a rally and held off the Rams to run out winners.

Besides Edwards' 27 points, Caldwell and Morris Adams each had nine points and Terrance Walker added six points. For the Rams, Tyrone Bell led with 16 points, with Davion Williford scoring 13 and Emmett Gordon nine.

Friday's curtain-raiser saw the Dragons take a 70-42 win over the Cougars, with Yahuza Rasis leading St. Mary's with 17 points and Antonio Burks and Dominic Mitchell each scoring 12; Carnahan was led by Aaron Brookins' 11 points, with Marius Molton and Tyrone Wright each getting nine.

