

# Alton defeats Granite City in contest at SIUE 71-45

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer  
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**EDWARDSVILLE** – **Alton** has had a few conversations about getting off to quick starts in games as of late.

“We've had a handful of conversations the last couple of weeks about how we need to approach the beginning and how we need to start,” **Redbird coach Eric Smith** said.

The Redbirds did, indeed, get out to a great start out of the gates as they defeated **Granite City** 71-45 in the opening game of the SWC @ The E event at SIU-Edwardsville's Vadalebene Center Saturday afternoon.

“Like the St. Mary's game (last week in the Redbird Tip-Off Classic), we kind of stalled out in second gear to begin with,” Smith said. “But we have the ability to be kind of an explosive group; obviously, the more explosive we are at the beginning, the better off it's going to be for us.”

“We tried to do some different things on them,” said **Warrior coach Raffi Karibian**, who was making his league debut as the GCHS coach. “We played 1-3-1, played some 2-3, a triangle-and-two; we threw a lot at them for early in the season. I just felt that when we did what we were supposed to do, and we were where we were supposed to be and we boxed out and rebounded, we took care of the basketball and got a good shot, we were right into the game.

“Unfortunately, every time we made a mistake, it's a basket for them because they're so athletic; that's a tough way to play basketball.”

All of the Redbirds' starters had scored before the halfway mark of the opening term. “We talk and talk and talk about how people can play man, zone, whatever what they want to do against us,” Smith said, “but traditionally, whatever anyone's been able to do against us, we've always had the ability to get paint touches, and as long as we're unselfish and as long as we drive and kick and don't necessarily have to be the guy who makes the play but give it to the guy who makes the play, we feel like we'll be OK.”

It won't get easier for the Warriors as the season goes in, Karibian acknowledged. “Every team in the conference is loaded,” Karibian said. “I've seen the preseason tournaments and everyone's done well; we struggled.”

**Damion Reid** led the Redbirds with 13 points, with **Kevin Caldwell** adding 12 and **Ty'ohn Trimble** 10. **Torrey Deal** led the Warriors with 13 points, with **Freddy Edwards** adding seven points and **Jaylin Harper** six.





