

# Kevin Caldwell lifts Alton's boys basketball team with his outstanding play on court

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer  
January 23 2017 6:35 AM



**COLLINSVILLE** – **Kevin Caldwell** has come up big when his **Alton** teammates needed him most.

Caldwell drove the length of the floor and scored, then came up with a big defensive play down the stretch when the Redbirds defeated O'Fallon on the road in early December.

Then came a road game at Belleville East right before the holidays when, after the Lancers had tied the game in the late going, Caldwell went down the floor and launched an NBA-range three-pointer that knocked off the Lancers.

All that came while Maurice Edwards was out of the Redbird lineup.

Caldwell reached a career high with a 31-point game against McCluer in last week's Belleville East Chic-Fil-A Classic tournament, helping the Redbirds win the consolation-bracket title.

"When Mo was out, I wanted to step up and be a leader," Caldwell said, "bring us together when one of our best players not being there; that's the time when we needed to come together and play together. I stepped up a little bit and my teammates helped me."

The Redbirds' come-from-behind win against the Lancers was, in Caldwell's eyes, a statement game. "Coming from behind and beating a good team like that without our best player, that was good. There's lots of good teams around here and a lot of good players; you've got to come out and play hard every night."

Caldwell began playing basketball when he was in first grade. "My dad played, so I was kind of forced into it," Caldwell said with a laugh. "But I love the game and love to play it; it's a good game."

When Caldwell started playing, he modeled his game after Kevin Durant. "I'm no long, tall 7-foot guard," Caldwell said. "I take stuff from Dwayne Wade and those guys who get to the basket really good; Russell Westbrook, I try to imitate him too."

The Redbirds showed resiliency when Edwards went down with an injury at the halftime buzzer in their Tuesday night overtime win at Collinsville, which Caldwell was pleased with. "We wanted to stick with what we do," Caldwell said. "With Mo being out, we didn't want to try being heroes, just stick to what we do."

"We just want to keep getting getting better, keep going forward, just keep going forward."