



Rivals Edwardsville-Alton meet again tonight, this time for 4A Granite City Regional crown

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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GRANITE CITY – Southwestern Conference rivals Alton and Edwardsville will be clashing for the third time this season tonight, this time with much at stake.

The Redbirds and Tigers will meet at 7 p.m. tonight at Granite City's Memorial Gym in the final of the IHSA Class 4A Regional, with the winner taking on tonight's East St. Louis-Belleville West winner in tonight's Belleville East Regional final at 7 p.m. Tuesday at a Metro East venue to be announced in a semifinal contest of the Ottawa Sectional.

Edwardsville enters the game with a 27-1 mark on the year, the Tigers' only loss coming early in the season to Belleville West in the SWC season-opening SWC at the E event at SIU-Edwardsville's Vadalebene Center; EHS won the SWC title with a 13-1 record and defeated Chatham Glenwood 67-38 in a semifinal game Tuesday night. Alton goes into the game at 16-11, having eliminated the host Warriors 74-40 in a first-round game Monday night and Quincy 53-43 in Wednesday night's semifinal contest; the Redbirds finished at 7-7 in the league this season. In their two SWC games this year, Edwardsville defeated Alton 59-48 in Alton Jan. 24 and 76-61 in Edwardsville Feb. 17.

Maurice Edwards leads the Redbirds in scoring with a 12.8 points-per-game average, followed by Kevin Caldwell at 11.2 PPG, Dereau Clay at 10.9 PPG, Ty'ohn Trimble at 8.9 PPG and Donovan Clay at 5.9 PPG. For the Tigers, the senior trio of Mark Smith (21.4 PPG), A.J. Epenesa (15.2 PPG) and Oliver Stephen (13.9 PPG) lead the way, with Jack Marinko adding 8.9 PPG and Caleb Strohmeier 7.9 PPG; Epenesa leads EHS in rebounding at 13.9 RPG, with Smith averaging 8.2 RPG and Stephen 5.1 RPG.

Both teams do have a recent postseason history against each other; the Redbirds eliminated the Tigers from last year's Collinsville Sectional semifinals 63-59 and from the 2015 Edwardsville Regional final 44-27; Edwardsville defeated Alton 55-40 in the 2014 Granite City Regional final.

