



Playoff bound: Redbirds' Smith ready for upcoming challenges

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EAST ST. LOUIS - “We just played our heart out,” said Alton running back Darrell Smith following the Redbirds' 22-19 loss to East St. Louis in both teams' regular-season and Southwestern Conference finale at Clyde Jordan Stadium Friday night.

The Redbirds went to 5-4 on the year and 4-3 in the SWC with the loss, but will play in the IHSA Class 7A football playoffs; their postseason opener is on the road at Chicago Lincoln Park, with the time and date for the game to be announced.

“This is getting ready for the playoffs,” Smith, a senior, said. “I liked the way the defense played; we came out ready to go.”

Smith had an 86-yard touchdown run in the third quarter that pulled Alton to 22-19; on that run, Smith said “I trusted my line; they made the right blocks. When I get a hole, I'm going to hit it and I'm going to score.”

That the Redbirds were about to advance to the playoffs at that time excited Smith and his teammates.

“We're excited,” Smith said. “We're ready to come Monday ready to practice, watch film and fix the bad things we did and listen to our coach and do what he wants us to do.”