



Alton, Edwardsville, Jersey bowlers compete in Belleville's Southern Illinois Team Challenge

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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BELLEVILLE – Five Riverbender-area bowling teams took part in Saturday's Southern Illinois Team Challenge tournament at Bel-Air Bowl in Belleville; a total of 16 boys and girls teams took part in the event.

Alton finished in 10th place overall with a combined boys and girls total of 10,760 pins over a total of six games bowled by the boys team and the girls team on the day;

Edwardsville finished in 14th place at 9.737. Triad was the area's highest finisher on the day with a pinfall total of 11,106, Granite City finished 11th with 10,089 and Jersey took 13th with 9,988 on the day. Host Belleville East won the overall title at 12,207, edging out crosstown rival Belleville West by 469 pins, the Maroons scoring a pinfall count of 11,738; Freeburg took third with a pinfall of 11,648 and Highland took fourth at 11,123. Also taking part in the tournament were Mascoutah, Herrin, Harrisburg, Collinsville, Centralia, Taylorville and Trenton Wesclin.

Teams bowled three games in the morning before a lunch break, then were divided into gold and silver divisions for the afternoon session for bracket play, the top eight teams at lunch were in the gold bracket and bottom eight teams in the silver bracket. Alton's boys were defeated by Collinsville in the boys gold-bracket final 985-972 while Freeburg defeated the Warriors in the third-place game in the bracket 973-924 and the Knights downing Belleville West for fifth place; Herrin downed Jersey 942-870 in the silver-bracket final while the Tigers took fourth, falling to Mascoutah 837-823.

On the girls side, Triad finished sixth in the gold bracket, falling to Belleville West 907-672 in the fifth-place game, while in the silver bracket, Alton was defeated 805-763 by Collinsville in the final, Edwardsville dropped a 787-638 decision to Taylorville for third place and Granite City defeated Jersey 721-687 in the fifth-place game.

“The girls, for the way they finished today,” said Redbird coach Dave Meyer, “they stayed together, they bowled better, they really came together as a team. I'm really proud of them. Alex Bergin averaged 217 today, and if showed by finishing with the second-high series of 1,303 (with a high game of 237 for Bergin; it was topped only by the Maroons' Hayley Dunn at 1,363 for her six games with a high game of 245 to take the girls' individual championship).

“The boys, they stayed together; it was a good day all the way around. I was proud of Alton, both boys and girls to finish second place in the divisions they were in. Overall, I'm very proud of them; they worked hard – we came up here and we had a talk; the big thing that I told them was 'just have fun today – let's see what happens', and the way it looks in the scores, they had a great time today. They enjoyed themselves.”

“I did all right except the last two games,” said the Tigers' Michael Jenkins on his performance on the day. “I sort of hit a climax and and fell straight from there; overall, 202 isn't bad; it's a lot better than what I've been doing (Jenkins had a high game of 255 in his fourth game of the day with a six-game set of 1,213, a performance that topped the Tiger boys on the day).”

“Overall, I think we did our best that we could,” said EHS' Sydney Sahuri. “As a team, we tried and tried; there's a lot of really good teams here and I think we did the best that

we could.” Sahuri led the Tiger girls on the day with a six-game total of 1,062 with a high game of 222 for the day.

The Redbirds' day was highlighted by Derek Henderson turning in the day's second-best game overall at 298 in his third game of the tournament, topped only by a perfect game in the afternoon session by West's Sam Watson in his fifth game of the day – an achievement that drew the applause of the teams and fans all over the house.

Henderson's six-game total for the day was 1,257; Matt Engdale had the day's top series for the Redbirds, finishing with a six-game total of 1,290, good for 10th overall for the day with a high game of 247 in his opening game of the day; the boys' individual crown went to the Warriors' Ricky Hard with a six-game series of 1,461 with a high game of 275 on the day.

