

# Redbirds get past Tigers 55-50 in overtime

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer  
January 13 2018 5:52 AM





EDWARDSVILLE – Alton and Edwardsville entered Friday night's Southwestern Conference game at Edwardsville's Lucco-Jackson Gym ready to go.

The Redbirds had been through a four-game skid and was welcoming Kevin Caldwell back to the lineup after an ankle injury; the Tigers were coming off a close loss to Kansas City Rockhurst in last weekend's Highland Optimist Shootout.

The two teams stood in the middle of the ring going at each other, and when the dust cleared, it was a Caldwell driving layup in the closing seconds of regulation that forced overtime and key scores from Malik Smith, Darrell Smith and Maury Woods that sent Alton to a 55-50 overtime win over the Tigers. Both teams are at 10-5 on the season following the game, with Alton 6-2 in the league and Edwardsville at 5-2.

“The kids did a nice job battling through some adversity,” said Redbird coach Eric Smith. “They played pretty well; I'm proud of them.”

The Redbirds managed to get the win in what Smith called “a tough environment for us” in the Tigers' gym; the packed crowd was into the game the entire way, with both student cheer squads loudly supporting their team all night. “But that's the way it is,” Smith said. “Any win is good for us; we're excited about getting a win and we needed to get back on the right side of the column.”

Caldwell's return – he led the Redbirds with 15 points on the night – provided a lift for Alton. “He's been our vocal leader and our leader out on the floor,” Smith said. “It obviously helps - just having a good player out on the floor makes a big difference.”

“We did a lot of things well tonight,” said Tiger coach Mike Waldo. “Alton's good – they've got good players – they play good, their style fits their personnel well; I thought we did a lot of things really good tonight. We just played a really good team tonight and came up a little short.

“Caldwell's good – he's got a lot of skill and he tries hard; he helps them, definitely. They've got a lot of weapons, they're a hard team to stop going to the basket. They've got some guys who can shoot and they're a hard team to defend.”

The game started out close and stayed close all the way through, Alton getting out to a lead in the opening moments before Edwardsville took a small lead; in the end, the Redbirds had a 13-11 lead at quarter time which the Redbirds expanded on in the second quarter, Alton holding a 29-24 lead at halftime, Edwardsville's Jack Marinko scoring 16 points in the half.





It was Marinko and Caleb Strohmeier that led the way in the third period for the Tigers as they managed to get back in front, EHS holding a 38-36 lead at three-quarter time, but the Redbirds kept battling and stayed close to the Tigers, Caldwell getting a driving layup in the final seconds of the final quarter to tie the game at 49-49 and force overtime; that's when Alton took over and kept Marinko scoreless while a Darrell Smith score and Malik Smith free throws put the Redbirds in front for good.

In addition to Caldwell's 15, Darrell Smith and Josh Rivers each had 10 points for Alton, with Malik Smith adding seven; Marinko led the Tigers with 33 points and Strohmeier adding 13 on the night.

Both teams enter mid-season tournaments next week; the Redbirds head to the Belleville East Chick-Fil-A Classic, opening with Champaign Central at 6 p.m. Tuesday while the Tigers head to the 67th Salem Invitational Tournament, the Tigers meeting Chicagoland school Thornton Fractional North of Calumet City at 8 p.m. Thursday.







## **FRIDAY'S RESULTS**

**BOYS:** Alton 55, Edwardsville 50 (OT)

Belleville West 67, Collinsville 56

Vashon (St. Louis) 91, East St. Louis 58

Granite City 57, Belleville East 56

Highland 44, Triad 41

Lovejoy 54, Brussels 44

**GIRLS:** Edwardsville 80, Alton 22



[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)