

# **Alton's Currie's 37 saves, two power play goals help Redbirds defeat Tigers 5-2 in hockey**

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer  
January 20 2018 12:32 AM





EAST ALTON – A pair of second period power play goals, along with goalie Caleb Currie's 37 saves, helped Alton go on to a 5-2 win over Edwardsville in a Mississippi Valley Club Hockey Association game played Thursday night at the East Alton Ice Arena.

Currie's performance included 19 stops in the first period alone in a game where the Tigers outshot the Redbirds 39-15.

“I think we came out strong; that first goal definitely gave us momentum tonight,” said Redbird coach Aaron Kestler. “We came out, got that, Edwardsville came back with another one, but I think we just kept up the pace, and we were able to outskate them tonight.”

The Redbirds had been working on their power play in practice, and Kestler felt that the work paid off.

“Yeah, we worked the power play real well tonight,” Kestler said. “We worked around the outside, then got it into the middle. We really drove the net, so a lot of the things we've been working on in practice came to fruition tonight.”

Edwardsville coach Andrew Tucker also felt that Currie made the difference in a game where the Tigers played very well.

“I thought we played pretty well,” Tucker said. “Their goalie's really good, and he proved it tonight. We got 39 shots, and that's a pretty good effort for us.”

The Tigers got off to a good start in the first period, outshooting Alton 19-3, but Currie had the answers every time.

“We got off to a good start; I thought we could have banged a couple more in that might have changed the game,” Tucker said. “But he stood strong down there, and we had trouble getting it into the net.”

The Redbirds jumped out on top only 64 seconds into the game, as Bryce Mouser centered a loose puck that Anderson Carter flicked into the net to give Alton an early 1-0 lead. Edwardsville drew level at 5:20 when Logan Corzine skated close in and scored, Justin Harper picking up an assist on the play. Play then centered in the Alton zone, with the Tigers have some good chances, but Currie was there to thwart the Edwardsville attack.

The Redbirds took back the lead at 8:19 when Connor Neely took a pass from Mouser and scored to make it 2-1. Alton then killed off a Edwardsville two-man advantage at the end of the first into the beginning of the second period. It gave the Redbirds a boost, and six seconds after Edwardsville's Eric Liggett was called for hooking, Jacob Eppel took the face off and scored at 4:11 to give the Redbirds a 3-1 lead.

Corzine scored his second of the game at 6:33, taking a pass from Harper and scoring to cut the lead to 3-2. After a Tiger penalty, the Redbirds scored their second power play goal of the period at 7:54 when Tristan Mouser fed Eppel, who scored to give the Redbirds a 4-2 cushion.

“They did a really good job at getting the puck to the net,” Tucker said, “and we just never got back after that point.”

Currie went on to shut the door on Edwardsville, stopping shot after shot, while the Redbirds added on some late insurance at 12:17 of the third period, as Neely scored a shorthanded goal, assisted by Tristan Mouser and Eppel to make the final score 5-2.

Both teams each have one regular season game remaining — the Redbirds play Highland January 23 at East Alton in an 8:45 p.m. face off, while the Tigers play East Alton-Wood River next Thursday in a 9 p.m. start at Granite City. Both sides hope to win their final game to gain momentum going into the postseason in February.

“We definitely have things to work on,” Kestler said. “We're still a pretty young team; we've got a lot to work on. But these last few games now, definitely starting to see a lot more of what we want to see out of them. It's starting to look good for the playoffs.

“We've got one game left,” Kestler continued, “so we're clearly hoping for the W. That way, we can take that momentum going into the playoffs, and hopefully get a good run and go pretty deep into the playoffs.”

“We've got one more game,” Tucker said. “If we can get the win there, hopefully, we can get into the playoffs as the second seed, and just keep working hard. I think we're in a good spot, and the kids are improving each game, so we're seeing improvement.”



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