

# **Roxana's Bertoletti advances at state bowling tourney, while Alton ends outstanding season**

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer  
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O'FALLON – Friday's opening day of the 16th IHSA Boys Bowling Championship at St. Clair Bowl in O'Fallon was a mixed bag of results for area bowlers and teams.

Roxana's Christian Bertoletti stood tied for 93rd after the morning session with a total of 549, but rolled games of 244 and 216 in his first two afternoon games to put him into today's final rounds with a six-game total of 1,200 to make the cut; the top 30 bowlers from teams who missed the cut to 12 teams and individuals who reached the tournament advanced into today's sessions, which get under way at 9 a.m.

“After that first half of bowling, shooting 549 and coming back and shooting 651, I came back that second half and put all I had into it,” Bertoletti said immediately after his afternoon round finished up but before the announcement that he had advanced to Saturday's championship rounds. “It's going to be close either way if I make it on to tomorrow or not.”

Alton, the only area team who reached the tournament from last week's sectional at Mount Vernon, finished 23rd on the day in the 24-team field and missed the cut into today's final rounds; the top 12 teams advanced from Friday's first rounds into today's championship rounds, the Redbirds finishing ahead of Chicago St. Patrick with a six-game team pinfall of 5,181 on the day with junior Matt Engdale rolling the day's high game with a 220 in Game 2 of the morning session.

“Overall, we did not do good; I don't think we finished last, but we finished around 21st or 22nd,” said Redbird coach Dave Meyer immediately after the end of Friday's play. “We missed too many open frames today, 58 or 60 open frames and that's a lot of opens. We tried working on it this week.

“The (oil) pattern the boys bowled on today was tough; if you look at the scores overall, they are lower. They tried, they kept working, but the open frames killed us.”

Despite Friday's outcome, the Redbirds reaching the state tournament was an achievement they were proud of. “We made it to state,” Meyer said. “I graduate two seniors off this team (Derek Henderson and Justin Milliman), so I really hope the juniors learn from this this year and work hard and come back next year.”

Meyer will have much to remember from this year's edition of the Redbirds. “Most about this year's team was that never really gave up; it was just tough for them,” Meyer said, “especially today. This is the state tournament, we knew going in that you're bowling against the top 24 teams in the state.

“The best about this year was how the boys finished (last week's sectional in Mount Vernon), the way the boys did our holiday tournament; they did good there – the boys had a good season; it's sad that they ended it the way they did today; all the tournaments, they did real well at. These guys, I'm real proud of them – I wish the outcome for them would had been better, but the pins didn't fall for us today.”

Meyer is seeing Friday's result as a learning experience for the returning Redbirds in 2018-19. “It's going to be a learning experience; I think next year, it's going to be how the boys can learn from this, build on it and learn to work together as a team. I'm proud of the boys and the coaches who helped me out.”

Host O'Fallon and Collinsville were the only Metro East-area teams to advance to Saturday's play, the Panthers in second place with 6,291 pins, behind Rockton Hononegah's 6,502 but ahead of New Lenox Lincoln-Way Central (6,176), Freeport (6,169) and defending champion Machesney Park Harlem (6,121) to round out the top five; the Kahoks enter play today in eighth place at 5,876.

Freeburg had been above the cut line most of the day, but faded to 13th at 5,662; Belleville East finished 17th with 5,531 and Columbia finished 22nd at 5,239. Lockport Township's Alec Buchaas has the individual lead heading into today's play at 1,442 pins, with St. Charles North's Blake Miller (1,397) and Bolingbrooks' Alex Acosta (1,385) trailing Buchaas; Acosta had held the individual lead the biggest part of the day before Buchaas and Miller came on at the finish.

