

Three-touchdown burst leads Maroons past Redbirds, however Alton never quits

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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ALTON – One three-touchdown spree late in the second quarter proved to be the turning point in Friday night’s Belleville West-Alton Southwestern Conference football game at Public School Stadium.

“That’s just hard to come back from – I don’t care who you’re playing,” said Alton coach Eric Dickerson in the wake of a Maroon burst coming down the stretch to halftime in the Maroons’ 52-21 win over the Redbirds Friday, keeping West unbeaten at 4-0 overall, 2-0 in the SWC; Alton fell to 2-2 overall, 1-1 in the league.

“An 86-yard touchdown pass and a fumble recovered for a touchdown and another fumble recovered on the next series inside your own 10 – that’s hard to overcome,” Dickerson said. “You just can’t put the ball on the ground.

“That defense of theirs, they’re aggressive, they’re quick, they fly around and they get to the ball and when you’re down as much as we were, that’s a big hill to overcome.”

Despite the deficit, the Redbirds kept battling and got a 99-yard kickoff return for a touchdown from Terrance Walker after the three-touchdown burst ended in the second and a 61-yard touchdown catch from Moory Woods midway through the third quarter. “It’s a testament to our kids; they fought, and they never gave up,” Dickerson said. “They battled; we’ll just have to move on.

“It’s a long season; it just so happened it was a banged-up, bad week for us. It’s not an excuse – it’s a game, we all practice, we all get in there – you know, the next man up. Injuries are always going to happen in this game and you have someone willing to step up and play in their place.”

The Maroons took the lead early off a Dominic Lovett 16-yard touchdown catch just 2:38 into the contest; the Redbirds responded right away when Ahmad Sanders caught a 2-yard pass from Andrew Jones some two minutes later to tie it up at 7-7 before Will Lanxon caught the first of two touchdown passes he had on the night right before quarter time for a 14-7 Maroon lead.

D.J. Johnson then expanded the West lead to 21-7 with a four-yard burst with 5:44 to go before the Maroons scored three times in the span of 28 seconds on an Lovett 86-yard TD catch, a Jaylan McCray fumble recovery and an 18-yard Lanxon catch for a score to expand the lead to 42-7 before Walker took the kickoff following Lanxon’s second score, went to his right, found a seam and burst down the sideline for his 99-yard return for a touchdown.

Woods’ 61-yard TD catch midway through the third cut West’s lead to 42-21, but the Maroons had the final two scores of the game, a 24-yard field goal late in the third from Logan Siebert and a Johnson six-yard run in the final quarter.

Johnson had 173 yards rushing for the Maroons on the night while Lovett had a 133-yard receiving night for West; Tim Johnson led the Redbirds with 50 yards on the ground for the night while Sanders had 157 yards receiving on the night.

“There’s too much football left,” Dickerson said. “We’ve got five weeks left and to hang it on one game – you’re going to win some, you’re going to lose some; the best thing we can do right now is watch film and learn from our mistakes and be ready to go next Friday.”

Next Friday won’t be an easy assignment for the Redbirds; they travel to Edwardsville for a 7 p.m. clash with the Tigers before coming back to Public School Stadium Sept. 28 for a league game against Belleville East; the Maroons host former SWC rival Granite City next week before taking on traditional rival East St. Louis Sept. 28 at Clyde Jordan Stadium.

