

Late goal by Blue Devils eliminates 10-man Alton 2-1 in Collinsville Soccer Regional

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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COLLINSVILLE – Quincy's Robby Phillips scored in the 77th minute, just seconds after Alton had equalized, to defeat the Redbirds 2-1 in the semifinals of the IHSA Class 3A boy's soccer regional Tuesday night at Collinsville's Kahok Stadium.

Alton, who was eliminated with a record of 7-8-6 on the season, played the final ten minutes a man down after Braden Schrimpf was sent off with a straight red card after a trip of a Blue Devil player near the Redbird penalty area.

The Redbirds played very well and came back from adversity at the start of the second half.

“Yeah, I think they played well,” said Alton head coach Nick Funk. “We came out second half and gave one up in about 45 seconds, and that really hurt. Play so hard the first 40, then 45 seconds in, you drop one, and then about 50 seconds later, you hit the post. Between those two things, it can really set you back, but I think we fought through it; we played really well. We had a lot of chances, I think it was pretty back and forth.

“I think we may have had a few more in the first half, I think second half, we really dominated, and then the red card. Questionable call there, but it is what it is. The boys fought back from that too; we score a goal two minutes after the red. It’s tied up and then gave one up about two minutes later. So, it’s an up-and-down game. Much better showing against them this time than we did the first time; they gave us our first loss of the season (5-2 on Sept. 1). The boys fought hard.”

The Redbirds did play well after the red card, forcing a change in tactics on both sides.

“I think they kind of went into a little bit of a more defensive shape when we got the red,” Funk said, “knowing that they didn’t have to press as high. So we were able to attack a lot. Our back line is solid, so we were able to kind of throw one of those guys into the midfield and rely on just three back there. Yeah, I think we really played well being down a man.”

The Blue Devils had the match’s first big chance early on when Jaeden Smith got past the back line and broke in on goal, but was stopped by goalkeeper Owen Macias, who played a wonderful game all evening. Alton had their share of chances, particularly in the last ten minutes of the half, but Jake Happel was equal, stopping the Redbirds at every turn. Alton did have another chance off a corner in the final minute, creating a scramble in the Quincy box, but the ball was cleared away as the halftime siren sounded, leaving the score 0-0 at the break.

As the second half opened, Quincy got the breakthrough in the 41st minute as, off a throw-in, Evan Wiegand got the ball in the box, turned and slotted it home past Macias into the lower left-hand corner to make it 1-0 in favor of the Blue Devils. In the 43rd minute, Alton came very close to equalizing off a corner, as Joey Morrissey’s header just barely went past the near upright and a second chance hit off the opposite post.

Macias had to be sharp to stop two chances, the first coming in the 51st minute as he stopped a header on a free kick sent in from midfield, then a minute later, Macias easily caught an Ashtyn Erwin try from the distance to keep things at 1-0. The Redbirds had another chance off a counter in the 59th minute, but couldn't convert as Happel was there to smother the ball.

In the 71st minute, a Blue Devil opportunity was thwarted when Schrimpf tripped an attacker near the box. The referee didn't hesitate to pull out his red card and send off Schrimpf, forcing Alton to play with ten for the remainder of the match. Smith took the ensuing free kick, and Macias came up with a great save. Seconds later, a Quincy goal was wiped out after an offsides call, leaving it at 1-0.

The Redbirds were fired up after the sending off, and in the 74th minute, had a great chance off a throw, but couldn't get a shot off. Two minutes later came the equalizer off a free kick. The ball was chipped in nicely, where Sam Stutz got a head on it and directed into the back of the net to bring Alton level at 1-1.

Quincy took the lead right back seconds later, in the 77th, when on a counter, the ball came in on the near post to Phillips, who's shot ran true into the right-hand side of the net, giving the Blue Devils the lead right back at 2-1. Alton had one last shot in the dying seconds, but it went well wide as the final siren went, giving Quincy the 2-1 win.

In the first semifinal played earlier, Collinsville got goals from Camden Frey, Elvis Campos, and Logan Whitehead to help lead the Kahoks to a 4-0 win over Granite City. The Kahoks advance with a record of 15-5-2, while the Warriors finish the season at 9-10-2.

The Kahoks and Blue Devils will meet for the regional championship on Saturday afternoon at 3 p.m. at Kahok Stadium. The winner advances to the Sectional semifinal next Tuesday, also at Kahok Stadium, in a 6:30 p.m. kickoff.



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