

Redbirds head for Chicago in the playoffs again to face Rolling Meadows

by John Hough, Sports Writer
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ALTON - Friday night, the Alton Redbirds will attempt an upset in Chicago.

Tonight at 7 p.m. they'll take on the undefeated and sixth-seeded Rolling Meadows Mustangs in the first round of the Class 7A IHSA playoffs.

This is the second season in a row the Redbirds have qualified for the postseason and the 11th overall in school history. Last year they ventured up to the Windy City and

knocked off Lincoln Park in a devastating 32-12 victory to claim their second-ever playoff win.

“The kids have battled all year and faced some really good teams along the way in the regular season,” Alton head coach Eric Dickerson said. Our kids will be ready to go. They’ve had a good week of practice and are always excited to be in the playoffs. It takes a lot of work to get there. They’re looking forward to the opportunity.”

The Mustangs, who are the Mid-Suburban East champions, have defensively held opponents on average to 14 points per game. Offensively they boast a balanced offense that’s average 48 points per contest.

Quarterback, Arkadiusz Kleniuk has tossed 14 touchdowns, three interceptions, and produced 1,301 yards passing yards. Running back, Tymoteusz Szylak has rushed for over 1,200 yards and scored 17 touchdowns.

“ is a well-disciplined team. They’re not 9-0 for no reason,” Dickerson said. “They got a very good offensive line; they work well together. They have a couple running backs that run the ball hard and a good quarterback who can throw the ball well,”

The closest team to come close to beating Rolling Meadows was Hersey two weeks ago in a 38-35 result. Hersey is 8-1 and seeded ninth in 7A.

The Redbirds come in with a record of 5-4 and are seeded 27th.

Alton’s passing game is its biggest strength, with quarterback Andrew Jones enjoying a stellar season. Jones is 124 of 216 passing for 1,969 yards and 17 touchdowns, and he has plenty of targets to look for. Ahmad Sanders is the Redbirds’ leading receiver with 52 catches for 764 yards and six touchdowns, while Terrance Walker is close behind with 35 balls for 710 yards and seven touchdowns. Lonnie Tate is next with 17 receptions for 190 yards and four touchdowns, while Moory Woods has nine catches for 237 yards and two touchdowns.

Tim Johnson leads the way in rushing for Alton, with 145 carries for 970 yards and six touchdowns. Sanders has carried the ball 25 times for 88 yards and a touchdown, while Walker has five carries for 46 yards and a touchdown.

Defensively, Izeal Terrell leads the way for Alton with 58 solo tackles, 23 assists, and two sacks. Sanders has 23 solos and 21 assists and leads the Redbirds with five interceptions. Charles Miller has 36 solos and 24 assists to go with two picks, while Ju’ Qui Womack has 28 solos, eight assists, two fumble recoveries, and three interceptions. Walker has 17 solos and five assists along with a sack, three fumble recoveries, and an

interception, and Armonte' Miller has 23 solos and ten assists to go with a sack and a fumble recovery.

“It doesn't matter who we've played this year. We do what we do on offense,” Dickerson said. “It's very similar with our defensive philosophy. We'll go in there and try to get our athletes the ball and hopefully put them in some space where they can make some plays.”

