

# **Redbirds' Messenger In Three-Way Tie For SWC Girls Golf Tourney Lead, Kenney Tied For 11th As Alton Is In Fourth Place**

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer  
September 2 2020 9:32 PM





WOOD RIVER - Alton's Natalie Messinger finished in a three-way tie for first with a one-over-par 72, while Riley Kenney is tied for 11th place with an 82 as Alton's girls golf team is in fourth place after the first round of the Southwestern Conference golf tournament, played Tuesday morning and afternoon at Belk Park Golf Course in Wood River.

O'Fallon lead the tournament after the first day with a team score of 294, with Edwardsville in second at 311, Belleville East sitting third with a score of 339, the Redbirds in fourth with a score of 350, Belleville West in fifth, coming in at 361, and Collinsville sixth with a 371.

There were some good things that the Redbirds did on the day, but there were also shots left on the table that cost the team as well.

"I think we left some shots out there that we definitely need to improve on," said Alton head coach Carey Cappel. "Natalie had a great round, finished one over on the day. Fantastic. Riley Kenney shot 82, so she played well also. But we still need to go back to basics, and work on some short game, and just fine tune a few things before the second go-round."

The Redbirds do have plenty of things to work on going into the second round, set for Far Oaks Golf Course in Caseyville on Tuesday, Sept. 29, and Cappel is confident that her team will rise to the occasion.

"We feel good going into the second round," Cappel said. "I'm excited to get into practice tomorrow and fine tune a few things, and set some personal goals for our next week. We have a nine hole match on Thursday, so hopefully, we'll see some improvement then."

The conditions weren't the best, with a steady rain falling most of the morning, but the teams played through until shortly after 11 a.m., when the golfers were called in for a rain delay that lasted approximately 45-50 minutes.

"Obviously, it was wet out there," Cappel said. "I mean, we didn't get any roll; there wasn't a ton of roll to begin with. But it plays a little bit long out here anyways, and the rain tends to make it a little longer. But really, it didn't affect us mentally. We were ready to go, and the girls stayed loose while we were waiting, no complaints. And then, we got to get back out there quickly, so it didn't really affect us too much."

Messinger is in a three-way tie for the lead with her 72, level with Edwardsville's Nicole Johnson and O'Fallon's Reagan Martin, while Kenney is tied for 11th with the Panthers' Valerie Meinkoth with both shooting an 82. O'Fallon's Dylan Kirchoff and Chloe Davidson are tied for fourth with each shooting 73, the Tigers' Grace Daech is sixth with a 75, Maddie Vanderheyden of O'Fallon is seventh with a 76, the Tigers' Riley Burns and Belleville East's Ellie Eversman are tied for eighth with both firing a 78, and the Lancers' Sydney Nelson rounded out the top ten with a 79.

Besides Messinger and Kenney, Josie Giertz shot a 93, Olivia Boyd carded a 103, Lexi Paulin shot an 117, and Samantha Eales had an 118. Collinsville was led by both Ricki Merlak and Abby Fister, who each shot a 90, followed by Maya Clark, with a 93, Sammi Qualls shooting a 98, Kiley Belobraydic carding a 99, and both Carstyn Jones and Anna Belobraydic each having a 106.

The Redbirds will host a triangular meet on Thursday against both Belleville East and Collinsville, then play against Marquette Catholic at Rolling Hills Golf Course on Sept. 10 before hosting their own invitational tournament Sept. 12.



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