

Elliott Scores 24: Redbirds Rebound In Strong Fashion But Lose In Double-Overtime To Tigers

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EDWARDSVILLE - Alton's Redbirds rebounded from a slow start to make one of the most dramatic games in recent memory with Edwardsville in a 49-47 double-overtime loss Friday night at Edwardsville.

First-year Redbird head coach Eric McCrary felt that his team did play hard, but didn't realize how difficult it is to play at Edwardsville.

"I told the guys all week, and I told them prior to it," McCrary said, "a lot of our guys are young, or the older guys, between COVID last year being weird and then, playing underclassmen prior, that I don't think they realize how hard it is to come to Edwardsville and play. This is one of the hardest places to play in the conference. Unbelievably coached, run their stuff really well, big court, atmosphere's always great. This is one of the harder places to play, and we got a taste of it, and a road conference game. I told them the Southwestern Conference is one of the best, if not the best, in the state. So we're going to be in dogfights every night. Just a tough one."

The Redbirds didn't foul to force Edwardsville to the line on the three-pointers that helped decide the game.

"The last one, I think they were in the bonus," McCrary said, "but we had fouled a couple of times before we got to bonus. The last one, you've got to tip your cap there. We guarded really well, and scouting report-wise, we knew (Pacatte) would pop and shoot. He's got varsity experience, and he's popped and shoot before. He hadn't taken one all game, and hats off to him for not taking one all game, and then, just stepping back and burying it like that with that kind of pressure. All you can do is shake their hand."

Elliott had a game-high 24 points and helped carry Alton throughout.

"He's a darn good player," McCrary said of Elliott, "and he carried us and battled. And all of our guys just battled. I just told them I couldn't be more prouder of the and their effort and their focus and their desire. It's not the outcome we wanted, it doesn't make you feel any better, but like I said to them, if we just keep doing the right things, and keep getting better, it's a long season, and we've just got to take it day-by-day right now."

It was all Tigers in the first quarter, as Edwardsville scored all 12 points in the period, starting with a pair of free throws from Malik Allen and baskets from Spiller and Isayah Kloster, ending with baskets from Jordan Bush, Hersch Greene and A.J. Tillman to make it 12-0 Tigers after the first.

The run extended into the start of the second quarter on a basket by Kloster to make it 14-0 before a Jeremiah Van Zandt three with 5:07 left gave the Redbirds its first basket and cut the lead to 14-3. It sparked an Alton 12-0 run, where Elliott scored the next five points on a basket and a three to make it 14-8, and baskets by Roger Elliott and Byron Stampley, Jr. to cut the lead to 14-12. Tillman scored late in the quarter, but at the end,

Adrian Elliott drove the floor and got a lay-up before the buzzer to cut the Tigers' lead to 16-14 at halftime, giving Alton momentum.

A free throw and Tiger basket gave Edwardsville an 18-15 lead before an Elliott three tied the game for the first time at 18-18, and after a Tiger Free throw, another Elliott basket gave the Redbirds its first lead at 20-19 with 3:08 left in third. The teams traded baskets to make it 22-21 Alton before a Roger Elliott three gave the Redbirds a 25-21 lead, and another three from Adrian Elliott gave Alton a 28-21 lead after three quarters.

A Stampley basket at the start of the fourth made the score 30-21 for Alton, but a Kloster basket and a three-point play from Tillman cut the edge to 30-26 with 4:37 left. Eventually, the Tigers were able to cut the lead to one, but a pair of Elliott free throws made it 37-34 with 50.3 seconds to go. Spiller's three with 7.5 seconds left tied the game 37-37, and Alton couldn't get a shot away before the buzzer, forcing overtime.

In the first overtime, both teams traded scores, with a free throw from Kloster with four seconds left tied the game again 42-42, setting up the second overtime. Again, both teams traded scored, with Elliott scoring with 41.2 seconds left to give the Redbirds a 47-46 lead, and the Tigers had the last chance, with Pacatte hitting the three with 4.4 seconds left. The Redbirds couldn't get the final shot off, giving the Tigers the win.

The Redbirds are now 0-4 and play at East St. Louis next Tuesday before returning home to play O'Fallon next Friday night, with both games starting at 7:30 p.m, then go back on the road to play at Springfield next Saturday afternoon at 2:30 p.m.



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