

Edwardsville, Triad, Alton And Granite City Ready To Play In Collinsville Holiday Classic, Other Area Schools To Play As Holiday Tournaments Return

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
December 27 2021 6:51 AM



Edwardsville, Triad, Alton and Granite City are the area schools set to play in the return of the Prairie Farms Collinsville Holiday Classic boys basketball tournament that opens up on Monday, with the championship game set for 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday.

The Collinsville tournament is the highlight of the return of the Holiday basketball tournaments that were all cancelled in 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Here's a look at each of the tournaments that Riverbender.com area schools will be playing in this week:

PRAIRIE FARMS HOLIDAY CLASSIC

The biggest tournament in the area will be played at Vergil Fletcher Gym and its side gym, and is one of the most entertaining, yet challenging, tournaments in the St. Louis area.

"The Collinsville tournament's always tough," said Edwardsville head coach Dustin Battas in a recent interview. "We have a really tough first round opponent in Decatur MacArthur, and there's nowhere to hide in that bracket. There's going to be a good team, no matter where you go. You're going to have to play against different styles. Decatur MacArthur's going to get all over us the length of the court, and then, we may play a team the next day that packs it in a zone or a pack line defense. So the Collinsville tournament is really challenging, because there's good teams and they play all different styles. You have to be able to adapt, and you have to be able to put your guys in spots where they can counter whatever they're seeing from the other team. That's what we're going to work on these next few days of practice."

The tournament opens Monday at 9 a.m., with Belleville East playing against Madison, with the Tigers and Generals taking the floor at 10:30 a.m. After a brief intermission, play resumes at 1 p.m. with Quincy meeting Belleville Althoff Catholic, followed by the Redbirds meeting Lincoln at 2:30 p.m., with Oakville of south St. Louis County meeting Mundelein of suburban Chicago at 4 p.m. The evening session starts at 6:30 p.m. when O'Fallon plays against the Knights, the host Kahoks meeting Wasilla, Alaska, at 8 p.m., and the final game of the first round pits the Warriors against Rockford East at 9:30 p.m.

The first round winners advance to the quarterfinals Tuesday morning and afternoon, while the losers go to the consolation bracket quarters in the auxiliary gym at the same times. The semifinals in both brackets Tuesday evening at 6:30 and 8 p.m. The final is set for Wednesday night at 7:30 p.m.

In other tournaments involving area teams this week:

49TH VANDALIA HOLIDAY TOURNAMENT

Father McGivney Catholic will be playing once again in the Vandalia Holiday Tournament, which goes from Monday through Thursday, and have been placed in Group B in the group stage and will play Pana, Shelbyville, Flora and Nokomis.

The Griffins play twice on Monday, going against Flora at 11 a.m. and Shelbyville at 3:30 p.m. McGivney then goes against Pana at 3:30 p.m on Tuesday, then finishes the group stage against Nokomis Wednesday morning at 11 a.m. The final, between the winners of Group A and Group B, is set for Thursday night at 8 p.m.

14TH DUSTER THOMAS CLASSIC

Roxana and Jersey are set to play in the 14th Duster Thomas Classic at Pinckneyville High School in the tournament named for one of the greatest players and coaches in Illinois high school basketball history.

The Shells meet the hosts on Monday at 6 p.m., while the Panthers play against Woodlawn at 1:30 p.m, both games in the first round. The quarterfinals are set for Tuesday evening, with the semifinals set for Wednesday afternoon and the final is scheduled for that night at 8 p.m.

60TH BREESE MATER DEI CATHOLIC TOURNAMENT

Highland and Metro-East Lutheran will be playing in the 60th edition of the Breese Mater Dei Catholic tournament, scheduled for Monday through Thursday, and both have been placed in opposite groups for the first stage of the tournament.

The Bulldogs are in Group A, and will meet Briarcrest Christian of Eads, Tenn., Breese Central, Louisville Doss and Trenton Wesclin. Highland opens with Breese Central Monday afternoon at 1 p.m., then plays against Wesclin later that night at 7 p.m., takes on Briarcrest Tuesday night at 6 p.m., then concludes the group stage against Doss Wednesday afternoon at 3 p.m.

Metro-East will be in Group B with host Mater Dei, Mascoutah, Chillicothe Illinois Valley Central and Nashville, and meet up with Mascoutah Monday at 6:30 p.m. Metro-East plays twice on Tuesday, first going against IVC at 12 noon, then meeting Nashville at 7:30 p.m, concluding group play against Mater Dei on Wednesday at 6 p.m.

The final of the tournament is set for Thursday night at 7:30 p.m.

CARLINVILLE HOLIDAY TOURNAMENT

Bunker Hill, Hardin Calhoun, East Alton-Wood River and Staunton join the host Cavaliers in the Carlinville Holiday Tournament, set for Monday-Thursday at the Carlinville Big House.

The Minutemen and Warriors join the Cavvies in the Green Group, with Bunker Hill meeting Litchfield Monday at 4:30 p.m., followed by Calhoun going against Carlinville at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday's games see Litchfield meeting Calhoun at 3 p.m., with Bunker Hill going up against Carlinville at 6 p.m. Wednesday's games see the Warriors against the Minutemen at 4:30 p.m., and the Cavaliers playing the Purple Panthers at 7:30 p.m.

Staunton and EAWR are in the Red Group, and go up against each other Monday at 1:30 p.m. Tuesday's games see the Oilers playing Gillespie at 1:30 p.m., while the Bulldogs take on Hillsboro at 7:30 p.m. The final group games on Wednesday see Gillespie play Staunton at 3 p.m. and EAWR go against Hillsboro at 6 p.m.

The final is set for Thursday night at 7:30 p.m.

COLUMBIA-FREEBURG TOURNAMENT

Civic Memorial, Valmeyer, Marquette Catholic and Piasa Southwestern will play in the Columbia-Freeburg tournament, this year being played in Columbia, starting Monday and ending on Wednesday.

The Pirates and Explorers are in Group A with Waterloo Gibault Catholic and Waterloo, and the stage starts Monday with Valmeyer against Gibault at 12:30 p.m., and Waterloo playing Marquette at 2 p.m. The Pirates and Explorers face each other on Tuesday at 11 a.m, with Waterloo and Valmeyer going against each other at 2 p.m., and Marquette going against Gibault at 3:30 p.m.

The Piasa Birds and Eagles are both in Group B with Columbia and Freeburg, and that group starts Monday at 11 a.m., with Southwestern meeting Columbia, then turning right back around at 3:30 p.m. to play Freeburg. CM plays Columbia at 5 p.m. on Monday, then plays Freeburg Tuesday at 12:30 p.m., and ends up playing against the Birds at 5 p.m.

The final is set for Wednesday night at 6:30 p.m.

THE CLASSIC --- LARGE SCHOOL DIVISION

East St. Louis will be the only area representative in the Large School division of The Classic, being played at Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington and at Normal Community West High School, starting Monday and ending on Thursday.

The Flyers meet Normal University High Monday night at Illinois Wesleyan at 6:30 p. m. The quarterfinals in both the championship and consolation brackets will be played on Tuesday, with the final of the tournament set for Thursday night at IWU in an 8:45 p. m. tip-off.