

# **Alton Jumps Off To Fast Start, But Althoff Uses Athleticism And Length To Pull Ahead, Defeat Redbirds 69-47 In Consolation Quarterfinals**

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer  
December 29 2021 7:38 AM





COLLINSVILLE - Taylor Powell led all scorers with 21 points as he led four players in double figures as Belleville Althoff Catholic pulled away in the second half to defeat Alton 69-47 in the consolation quarterfinals of the 37th Prairie Farms Collinsville Holiday Classic Tuesday morning in the auxiliary gym at Collinsville High School.

The Redbirds jumped out in front to an 8-2 lead in the first five minutes before the Crusaders were able rebound and pulled away in the second half. Alton kept battling and playing hard throughout, as the team has all season long.

"It was a tough one," said Redbird head coach Eric McCrary. "We came out ready to go, and we jumped on them, they battled back, it was tight going into halftime. The second half, their length and athleticism really gave us fits there. Most games, we're going to be undersized in, and we know that. Today, though, a lot of that length really gave us some problems."

The Redbird players, to their credit, didn't give up and kept battling the entire 32 minutes.

"The kids, as always, they played hard," McCrary said. "We were right there in the first half. Obviously, it could have gone either way. Even late in the fourth quarter, we were right there; we got it under 10. we're right at it and we're battling back. Just a couple of

plays here and there, timely plays we didn't make, and that's how the game goes sometimes."

Ihzel Brown helped Alton stay in it until the end, as he, Byron Stampley, Jr. and Adrian Elliott, among others, made great contributions.

"Ihzel battled," McCrary said. "That might have been his best game that he's played. He's undersized, but he's working and hustling, he battled. I'm proud of him and I'm proud of all the guys. We're just going to keep working and it's going to start going our way soon."

The Redbirds got off to a big start, going ahead 8-2 in the opening minutes before Althoff came back and eventually took a 13-10 lead late in the first quarter. Free throws from Blake Hall and Alex Macias tied the game at 13-13, but a dunk from Powell gave Althoff a 15-13 lead at the end of the first quarter. The teams traded baskets to start the second quarter, with a Powell free throw and a three from Keyshon Blackmon gave the Crusaders a 21-15 lead. The teams again traded baskets before a three from Jordan Lewis extended the Althoff lead to 26-19. Alton rallied with an 8-2 run, with a jumper from Elliott pulling the Redbirds to within 28-27 before a basket from Lewis shortly before the buzzer gave the Crusaders a 30-27 halftime lead.

Althoff started the second half with a basket by Lewis and a three from Blackmon to extend the lead to 35-27. The Crusaders eventually outscored the Redbirds in the quarter 19-11 to take a 49-38 lead at the end of the third, but Elliott was able to lead a charge at the start of the fourth quarter that cut the lead down to 55-45 to give Alton a chance. Powell led the Crusaders on a final rally that saw them outscore the Redbirds 14-2 to give Althoff its 69-47 win.

Elliott and Stampley led the Redbirds with 12 points each, with Brown adding 10,, Macias had six points, Roger Elliott had four points and Macias scored three points. Besides Powell's 21 points, D'Necco Rucker added 16 points, Lewis hit for 13 points, Blackmon had 12 points, Dainen Rucker had five points and Lucious Dones had two points.

The Redbirds were set to play Edwardsville in the 13th-place semifinals later in the day, and McCrary knew that his team would be ready to play.

"Well, it's never the idea to play conference games in these tournaments," McCrary said, "and it's going to be Belleville East or Edwardsville regardless. They'll be ready for us. I told the kids there they've played the same amount of games in the same amount of time

in this tournament as we have. I know we're tired, but they've played just the same, so we've got to get ready to go. It was a tough one the last time around, and hopefully, we can make one or two more plays this time and have it go our way."







### 13TH PLACE SEMIFINALS

**EDWARDSVILLE 39, ALTON 38:** Bryce Spiller's jumper with 15 seconds left in regulation gave Edwardsville their second close win over Alton of the season.

The Tigers held a 14-11 lead after the first quarter, with the Redbirds rallying to take a 24-22 halftime lead, with Edwardsville coming right back to take a 33-27 lead after the third quarter. Alton outscored the Tigers in the fourth 11-6, but Spiller's game-winner gave Edwardsville the win.

Spiller led the Tigers with 16 points, with Jordan Bush, Isayah Kloster and Hersch Greene all scoring four points apiece, A.J. Tillman, Shaun Pacatte and Alec Marchetto all having three points each and Lucas Greer hitting for two points.

Byron Stampley, Jr. led the Redbirds with 15 points, with Alex Macias hitting for eight points, both Adrian Elliott and Blake Hall each hit for five points, Ihzel Brown and Jeremiah Van Zandt both scored two points and Roger Elliott scored a single point.

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