

Edwardsville, Alton battle in close triangular wrestling meet

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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ALTON – To say that it's been an interesting wrestling season in the Southwestern Conference would perhaps be an understatement.

The league's top four sides – Alton, Edwardsville, Belleville West and Granite City – have all knocked each other off at some point during the season, leaving the SWC title going into Thursday's key Edwardsville-Alton meet up for grabs.

While the Maroons and Warriors are yet to meet – that will take place next week – the race for the championship got a bit clearer after the Tigers, riding big wins in the lower weights, scored a 32-21 win over the Redbirds at Alton's gym as part of a triangular, with Belleville Althoff also taking on the two teams.

Both Edwardsville coach Jon Wagner and Alton coach Eric Roberson knew going in much was at stake, especially with two good sides tangling.

“We knew it was going to be a good match,” Wagner said. “We competed hard. We knew they had some really good wrestlers and they wrestled close. They have a great coaching staff and Eric's really worked them hard. We've got a lot of respect for them.”

“I thought we wrestled really tough tonight,” Roberson said. “It was a tough loss, but we don't have a lot of time to feel sorry for ourselves; we have to regroup and get ready for a tournament (in Batavia on Saturday). We were competitive in some of our bouts, not so competitive in others; we just couldn't get the key wins when we needed them.”

The meet started at 152 pounds, where Nicholas DeLoach got things off with a 7-2 win over James Ziegler, giving the Redbirds the first three points. Chris Hossa countered that with a 9-7 win over Quiante Walker at 160 to tie it at 3-3, but Alton regained the lead Cameron Cauley downed Cyrus Ahart 7-4 at 170.

James Watters evened it up again at 6-6 when he downed KeOnty Holmes 11-7 at 182, but an 8-0 win by Cameron Blair over Kendrick Russell at 195 gave the Tigers four big points and a 10-6 lead. Alecquan Russell, over Nathan Crone 5-2 at 220, and Marion Pierson, with a 2:45 pin of Bobby Burnside, gave Alton a 15-10 lead at the first break of the evening.

Both sides wrestled Althoff in between sessions, and soon after, the meet resumed at 103, where Jaleen Mancy picked up five key points with a 16-0 technical fall win over Nigel Ward, followed by a big 21-6 win by Ben Schluter over Hunter Hobbs at 112, putting Edwardsville back on top 20-15.

One of the closest matches of the night came at 120, where Alton's Conner Broyles and Edwardsville's Tanner Anthony traded one-point escapes in the final minute and seemed headed to overtime. Broyles was called for a penalty at the edge of the mat as the buzzer sounded and penalized a point, giving Anthony a 2-1 win.

Tim McCarvey got three of those points back with a 10-5 decision over Joseph Griffin at 126, but the Redbirds had to forfeit the 132 bout to put the Tigers ahead 29-18, and Rafael Roman closed the door on Alton with a 3-0 win over Alejandro Lopez at 138. Phyllip DeLoach finished the meet with a 7-2 win over Gav McBride at 145.

In the other two meets, Edwardsville downed Althoff 49-29 while Alton defeated the Crusaders 48-18.

Edwardsville went to 12-5 overall, 4-1 in the SWC, while Alton fell to 12-2, 3-2 in the conference. The Redbirds travel to Batavia for the Batavia Invitational, while Edwardsville goes to the St. Charles West Tournament; both take place Saturday.



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