

Braundemeier's Hat Trick Gives Alton 3-1 Win Over Bethalto, Lead In MVCHA Playoff Series

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EAST ALTON - Sophomore forward Landon Braundemeier's hat trick was all Alton needed as the Redbirds defeated Bethalto 3-1 in the opening game of their first-round

Mississippi Valley Club Hockey Association West Division playoff series Tuesday night at the East Alton Ice Arena.

The win gave Alton a 1-0 lead in their best-of-three series, with game two being played Thursday at the Wilson Park Ice Rink in Granite City.

Braundemeier gave the Redbirds a 1-0 lead at 8:06 of the first period, assisted by Will VanVoorhis, but Ty Ferguson tied the game for the Eagles at 10:07 on a goal assisted by Jace Brawner.

The game remained deadlocked until early in the third period, when Braundemeier scored from Henry Neely at 3:09 to give Alton a 2-1 lead, then got his hat trick goal at 6:50, assisted by VanVoorhis to give the Redbirds a 3-1 lead.

Greg Fite, in goal for Alton, made the lead stand up the rest of the way to give Alton the win and a one-game lead in the series.

The Redbirds outshot Bethalto 45-16, with Fite making 15 saves in goal, while Eagle goalie Ryan Tolbert made 42 saves.

If Bethalto wins Thursday night, the third and deciding game of the series will be played at 9 p.m. next Monday at East Alton Ice Arena.

In other games played on Tuesday, both at the McKendree Metro Rec-Plex in O'Fallon, Collinsville defeated Columbia 3-1 to sweep their series 2-0, while Triad evened their series 1-1 with East Alton-Wood River as the Knights took a 3-2 win in game two.

The Knights-Oilers series will be decided on Monday night at the Wilson Park rink in an 8:55 p.m. start, while the Kahoks open their division semifinal series against top seed Freeburg/Waterloo Monday at the McKendree Rec-Plex, with a 7:30 p.m. face-off.

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