

# O'Fallon Edges Alton's Girls Soccer Team 1-0

by Bradley Piros, Reporter  
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O'FALLON - The Alton High School girls soccer team couldn't get their payback against the O'Fallon Panthers, but it was close throughout. OHS won both meetings of the season, this time by just one goal in a 1-0 win at home on Tuesday night (April 19). O'Fallon won the previous meeting 3-1 back on March 29<sup>th</sup>.

With the loss, the Redbirds fall to 11-3 while the Panthers move to 10-1, with their only loss coming against undefeated Triad. This is the first time this season that Alton has lost back-to-back games.

On paper, this game should have been very close, and it was. It had the feeling of a postseason game under the lights and a matchup between two of the best teams in the region.

The Panthers scored their lone goal in the 18<sup>th</sup> minute off of a bit of a broken play. The ball came into the box and Alton's keeper, junior Peyton Baker, made the initial save, but after a couple of bounces and failed clearance attempts, the ball finally bounced in off freshman midfielder Sadie Mueller. It was her second goal of the season and held on to be the game-winner in a tight affair.

Alton just came off the 3-1 loss against Triad on Friday night, and head coach Gwen Sabo-Howland immediately put it behind her to focus on O'Fallon. She mentioned really wanting the conference win.

One of the more impressive things about the win for OHS is that they did it without their current leading goal scorer senior forward Avery Christopher. She's netted 21 goals this season and has been a huge spark for the Panthers.

Sabo-Howland gave credit to O'Fallon for being able to send the next girl up, speaking highly of Christopher's replacement for the game senior forward Anna Chor.

"I think she was just as dangerous," Sabo said. "She played very similarly; they really didn't change their game plan. Good teams are able to do that, they just have someone else step up and fill that role."

That has been a frequent issue for Alton this season, a team that has been plagued with injuries. Unfortunately for Sabo-Howland, her team doesn't quite have the same depth as some of the other teams around the area including ones within the Southwestern Conference such as O'Fallon.

Sabo-Howland mentions that OHS has been "smacking" other teams in the conference with big wins against Edwardsville (5-1), Alton (3-1), Belleville East (7-1) and Collinsville (7-0). The Panthers are making easy work of their opposition and that's why Sabo-Howland called the game Tuesday night a "respectable loss."

She mentions telling her team the good and bad news after the game. The good news is that it was a bit of an off night for the Redbirds and that Sabo knows her team can



perform better. The bad news is that the effort against OHS just wasn't enough to grab the win.

The score line could have been worse if it wasn't for some of Baker's stellar saves to keep the game at just 1-0 for 80 minutes. The Panthers did a great job of locking down Peyton's sister Emily, Alton's star forward who has a team-high 22 goals.

Luckily, Sabo-Howland and her team have six days to recuperate and prepare for their next matchup. The Redbirds will travel to visit the Granite City Warriors on April 25<sup>th</sup> at 6:45 p.m.

"It will be nice having a break and not having games, but you know our next game is Granite City. It's another good physical team, so it will be a good matchup," Sabo finished with.

Alton will be back at home on May 5<sup>th</sup> when they host the Collinsville Kahoks at 6:45 p.m.



