

# Redbirds skywalk past opponents with slam style

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
February 9 2015 4:40 PM



Julius "Doctor J" Erving and David Thompson are credited with bringing the slam dunk to an art form back in the old American Basketball Association in the 1970s.

For those who have a desire to see an array of slam dunks like none other in high school basketball, an Alton High School game is the place to go this season. The Redbirds have multiple players who use dunks as part of their everyday approach.

In the game against Belleville West on Friday, the Redbirds had seven first half slam dunks. The top players, in regard to slam-dunks, are Carlos Anderson, a 6-foot-4 senior; 6-foot-7 senior Bryan Hudson; 6-foot sophomore Maurice Edwards and 6-foot senior Darrius Edwards. Each player had dunks in the first half of the game Friday night.

“We are just a year older and a year stronger and comfortable,” Alton coach Eric Smith said of his dunking contingency. “Slam dunks get people excited. For our kids, it helps with energy and in certain games it helps.”

What many people do not know is the history behind the slam dunk.

The first slam dunk contest was in the ABA All-Star Game in Denver in 1976 and featured Erving and Thompson. Both players eventually performed in the NBA when the ABA disbanded. Michael Jordan of the Chicago Bulls is another who helped redefine the slam in his era in the NBA.

For Alton, slam dunks are now part of a typical high school basketball game.

Alton came alive on Friday night at home against Belleville West with a strong second half performance to win 84-59 in front of a large Alton crowd. The fans were buzzing in awe through the first half of the dunk display that resembled a college or pro game, not high school.

“We were a little disappointed with our effort defensively in the first half and changed some things in the second half and stopped them a little better,” Smith said about Friday night. “When we let our athletes do some of the things they do well in an uptempo game, we are pretty successful. That is not to say we can’t play a half-court game; we have shown that. But we utilize our strengths better when we pace and the tempo of the game is fast.”

The victory on Friday night against Belleville West also pushed Alton to 20 wins, with only four losses this season.

“It’s a tribute to the kids we have had,” Smith said about hitting the 20-win plateau. “The kids have competed and play well enough to get 20 wins. There is a good following of fans this year, even for our road games. For the kids that is nice; the fan support means a lot.”

Friday, Alton faces Collinsville at home.

“They (Collinsville) have pieced together some wins,” Smith said. “We will have our work cut out for us. They have a little confidence going and a little hop in their steps.

They have pieced together some wins and have some talented kids. It will be another game where we have to play hard in another Southwestern Conference battle.”

