

# Alton wins key second game in playoffs against Collinville

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer  
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**EAST ALTON** – Alton's hockey team had their backs to the wall Monday night after Collinsville had taken a 1-0 lead in their best-of-three Mississippi Valley Club Hockey Association Class 2A North Division semifinal series.

The Redbirds responded to the challenge with six goals in the first two periods, then had to fight off a spirited comeback try by the Kahoks before Jake Cunningham iced it with 48 seconds to go to take a 7-3 win in Game 2 at East Alton Ice Arena.

The deciding game will be played at 7:15 p.m. this upcoming Monday at East Alton, with the winner advancing to the North Division Final against Edwardsville, which gets under way next Tuesday night.

“The boys knew what was at stake,” said Redbird coach Abram Henson, “and we just stayed with basic stuff, especially after we (took a timeout) to talk with them.

“We said just get back to what we do best, and we did.”

Alton's quick start wasn't that surprising to Kahok coach Brian Bednara, but it could have been much worse had it not been for some good play by goalie Caleb Nowicki. “We knew Alton has a fast team,” Bednara said, “but if don't have Caleb in there, things could had been tougher.

“We needed to play an aggressive, purpose-like game. We have to be more resolute on both sides of the ice, just play like with did in the third period tonight. It's going to be a tough game for both teams.”

Alton came out of the blocks quickly, striking first just 1:13 into the contest when Scotty Waldrup came out of a goalmouth scramble and fired past Nowicki for the first goal, Brendan Lowe and Alex Rubin assisting. Just 2:27 later, Brandon Lang upped the lead to 2-0 on a assist from Kain Henson.

Play settled down somewhat until Collinsville's Nick Hager was penalized for holding at 10:06. Just 16 seconds later, Waldrup scored again, this one on the power play, to increase the lead to 3-0 through the 13 minutes.

Cunningham opened second-period scoring when he took a feed from Rubin and fired past Nowicki to make it 4-0. Nearly three-and-a-half minutes later, Jake Bohn, with Hager off for cross-checking, scored on the power play from Ben Drake to make it 5-0, and Rubin scored 22 seconds later unassisted to make it 6-0 Redbirds, who seemingly had the game under control.

Not so fast, thought the Kahoks, who took advantage of the Redbirds being two men down because of penalties and got power-play goals from Cory Sperry and Jason Sperry to cut the lead to 6-2. Kalib Carlyle then cut the lead to 6-3 on a goal with 6:07 left. The Kahoks had several good chances, but couldn't get one past Redbird goalie Tyler St. Peters and wound up being finished off when Cunningham scored unassisted with 48 seconds left.

Collinsville outshot Alton 27-26, with St. Peters making 24 saves for the Redbirds and Nowicki getting 19 saves for the Kahoks. Both teams went 2-for-2 on the power play.



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