

Alton runs past Edwardsville 65-32 in conference matchup

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – For Alton against Edwardsville, everything that could go right did.

End result: The Redbirds got 17 points from Darius Edwards and shut down the Tigers in a 65-32 Southwestern Conference win Friday night at Lucco-Jackson Gym.

The Tigers, coming off a 40-37 loss to Collinsville at the buzzer Tuesday night, could never get on track against relentless Alton pressure.

“We wanted to be aggressive and set the tempo,” said Redbird coach Eric Smith. “We went out and played a full 32 minutes tonight; that's something we've stressed all year.

“We had a lot of people make contributions tonight. We stepped up and played with a sense of urgency that we needed.”

“Their big men and their guards are good,” Tiger coach Mike Waldo said. “They don't give up easy baskets, and as good of a game as they played tonight, it was hard for us to score. When we had a chance to guard them, things were good.

“Give them credit, their defense was really good tonight. They have a lot of depth; they're a complete team.”

Despite the loss, Waldo has been happy overall with the Tigers this season. “We've had an excellent year; we've been in games all season with a chance to win,” Waldo said. “We've competed well all season, we just ran into a good team tonight. We just have to move on and get ready for O'Fallon (the Tigers' next opponent on the road Tuesday night).”

Early indications that it wasn't going to be the Tigers' night came when the Redbirds opened with the first seven points on baskets from Edwards and Bryan Hudson before Dan Marinko got EHS on the scoreboard with a driving lay-in with 4:19 left in the first.

A basket and a pair of free throws from A.J. Epenesa got Edwardsville to 9-6 with 2:18 left in the first, but that was about as close as the Tigers could get as the Redbirds began to pull quickly away. They got to a 16-8 lead at quarter time and kept dominating on a 12-2 run through the second term. The lead went out 32-15 at the half, then 49-22 at three-quarter time as Alton never let their foot off the gas.

Smith had reminded his team at the half about how the Tigers bounced back and forged a late tie with the Kahoks before they fell on a three-pointer with 0.6 seconds left.

“We said to the kids that they couldn't afford to let up after how they came back against Collinsville,” Smith said. “We kept it going and made them work for the points they got.”

Hudson added 12 points for the Redbirds (21-4 overall, 9-2 SWC) and Carlos Anderson had 10; Epenesa led the Tigers (15-10 overall, 6-6 SWC) with 14 points, with Mark Smith adding 11.



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