

# Alton Boys Soccer Makes It Back-To-Back Wins To Open Season

by Bradley Piros, Reporter  
August 27 2022 10:33 AM



ALTON – For the first time in four years, the Alton Redbirds boys soccer team opened up their season with a 2-0 record. They did so with back-to-back shutouts as well.

“Never expect to have a start like this,” AHS boys soccer coach Tyler Hamilton said postgame.

“Our guys are responding and bringing some energy. So, hopefully, we can keep it going for game number three against Beardstown and win the tournament.”

After defeating Springfield Southeast comfortably by a score of 6-0 back on Thursday, they continued to improve heading into Saturday’s double-header to finish up play in the Redbird Round Robin Tournament.

There was a noticeable difference in the way Alton played in the first half against Jersey. While the game with the Panthers Saturday morning went scoreless for the first half, Alton would eventually prevail 3-0.

Alton was on the verge a few times in the first half but couldn’t put it in the back of the net. That changed in the final 40 minutes.

The play of the game wasn’t a goal, but a red card issued to Jersey’s junior midfielder Drake Goetten. It wasn’t a heinous foul, but when he tripped up Alton’s forward, sophomore Dillan Cowan, on a breakaway, he was given the card. Rules state that if a defender deliberately breaks up a clear scoring opportunity, that defender immediately receives a red card, with no warning necessary.

There was no arguing from Goetten or Jersey’s coaching staff. Hamilton agreed that it was the turning point of the game for his Redbirds.

At the time, it was a smart foul. If Cowan wasn’t tripped up, he was for sure in for goal. But the foul caught up with Jersey in the end.

Playing a man down is difficult, especially when you have to do it for almost the entire second half. Take nothing away from Alton’s performance. It was a good one, but things were much easier from then on out.

In the 50<sup>th</sup> minute, Cowan wasn’t going to be denied. After a mad scramble in the box, the ball came to Cowan, and he smashed it home to take a 1-0 advantage.

Hardly a minute later senior midfielder Frank Prediger scored into the bottom corner to double the Redbirds’ lead.

Despite being down to 10 men, Jersey still had some chances. They were moving the ball around well and had a great look in the 57’ minute but to no avail.

In the final 20 minutes of the game Jersey was clearly getting some heavy legs. Alton maintained around 80% possession in the second half and just wore the short-handed Panthers down.

That led to Alton's third and final goal in the 78<sup>th</sup> minute which once again came from Prediger.

Assists came from senior forward Jude Runyon, senior midfielder Grant Fournie, and senior defender Miles Sprague, in that order.

The shutout was a combined effort from senior Aiden Belchik and who played the first half and Sophomore Owen Sutton who played the final 40 minutes.

The Redbirds will be back at it this afternoon against Beardstown. That game is scheduled to start at 5:30 at Public School Stadium.

After today, Alton opens play in the Southwestern Conference next week against Edwardsville and both Belleville East and West.