

Lady Redbirds Off To Perfect Start – Win Alton Tip-Off Tournament

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
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ALTON – According to Alton High School girls basketball head coach Deserea Howard, it wasn't pretty, but they got the job done this weekend.

“It was a little ugly, but a W is a W,” Howard said Saturday night after beating Mater Dei. “We definitely have some things to work on, more importantly, just coming out with high energy every game no matter what.”

The Lady Redbirds started the season a perfect 2-0 winning the Alton Tip-Off Tournament Saturday night after a 49-36 win over the Mater Dei Knights. Alton won their season-opener against Springfield Southeast 73-32 Friday night.

The Redbirds got off to a slow start against the Knights and trailed in the opening minutes. They pulled it together though to lead 17-9 after the first quarter.

“We were flat. I could see it all over the team. Some girls were under the weather,” Howard said.

She was just relieved to have the tournament over with and get her team a little time off before a four-game road trip.

They were outscored 14-12 in the second quarter but still led by five points at the break. Alton pulled away outscoring the Knights 20-13 in the second half to go on to the win.

Laila Blakeny led the scoring Saturday night for Alton with 16 points, draining three shots from beyond the arc in the first half. Kiyoko Proctor was right behind her with 15 points. Proctor also went 5-5 from the free-throw line. She went on to earn All-Tournament honors and tournament MVP following the game.

Kaylea Lacy scored seven, Khaliyah Goree added four, Alyssa Lewis scored three, and Tayen Orr and Jarius Powers each scored two.

The Redbirds are a young team, one that is improving every time they step onto the court. Howard likes the pieces she currently has for the puzzle.

“Trying to work together and be a good team is always our motto,” she said. “We packed our schedule pretty tough this year.”

It’s definitely never an easy task playing in the Southwestern Conference.

“Our conference is tough. Any time you play in the conference you know it’s going to be tough,” Howard said. “And we built our non-conference schedule to be really tough too.”

The Redbirds will face rivals Edwardsville, East St. Louis, and O’Fallon a couple of times this season. Non-conference they’ll play the likes of Civic Memorial, who just earned fourth at state in Class 3A last season, MICDS, Mount Vernon, Lutheran St. Charles, and Lincolnshire Stevenson.

Alton won't be back in action again until Tuesday, November 22, when they travel to MICDS. That game has a 7 p.m. start time.

