

Alton And Edwardsville Boys Basketball Battle It Out In First Half Before Tigers Pull Away With Big Conference Win

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
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ALTON – The Alton High School boy's basketball team hosted their Southwestern Conference rivals Friday night. The Redbirds were beaten by the Edwardsville Tigers by a score of 59-42. Alton falls to 1-3 after three straight setbacks while EHS improves to 2-2.

Both teams came out slugging after the first tip-off. The teams traded blows until Edwardsville was able to inch ahead to an 11-9 lead after one quarter.

The teams continued to battle and it was still a one-possession game at halftime with the Tigers up 18-15.

Edwardsville was led by junior Malik Allen with his 20-point performance. He was one of three Tigers to drop double-digit scoring figures.

Senior Isayah Kloster had 12 points and junior AJ Tillman had 11. Rounding out the scoring was senior Jonathan Stump with six and junior Kris Cosby with four. Sophomores Herbert Martin and Iosefatu Epenesa as well as junior Jake Curry scored two points each.

Edwardsville head coach Dustin Battas was happy with not only happy with Allen's offensive performance but also what he did behind the ball.

The Tigers' defense held Alton to its fewest points scored so far this season.

The third quarter was also close with Edwardsville outscoring the Redbirds 14-11. They led 43-35 after three quarters before they pulled away in the fourth.

"I thought tonight we did a good job of handling the pressure. We didn't get rattled and kept our composure," Battas said. "Our effort tonight was outstanding," he added.

He did give credit to the hard-fought performance of the Redbirds though.

"That was a hard game. That score was not reflective of how hard that game was. That was a tough, competitive Southwestern Conference game."

As for Alton, no one on their team got into double digits. They were led by senior Blake Hall's nine points. Seniors Jamion Everage and Byron Stampley, as well as sophomore Alex Macias, each scored seven points.

Senior Tyrius Jones had five, sophomore Kameron Burnett had three, and sophomores Hassani Elliot and Junior Brown each had two points.

"We've been in every game until about halfway through the third quarter," newly appointed Alton head coach Dylan Dudley said. "Our challenge is to get to when we play as hard as we possibly can for four quarters."

He even took some of the blame during this three-game skid.

“You have to be able to play hard when it goes bad and we’re not very good at fighting adversity right now, and that’s my responsibility, my fault.”

Alton opened the season with an emphatic 88-67 win over Carnahan before falling to some tough schools like SLUH, O’Fallon, and now Edwardsville.

“It’s competition, it’s what you want. Obviously, you’re trying to win the game, but I think we have to learn how to play four quarters as hard as we can before we ever worry about winning the game.”

It’s not going to get any easier anytime soon for the Redbirds. They will take on East St. Louis and O’Fallon again next week.

Things get tougher for Edwardsville too as they play O’Fallon, Belleville East, and MICDS all next week as well.