

Powers Leads Redbirds With 20 Points In Historic 55-42 Win, First Over Edwardsville Since 1998

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
December 2 2022 8:00 PM





EDWARDSVILLE - Sophomore forward Jarius Powers led Alton with 20 points as the Redbirds went on a 14-0 run, scoring the last 12 points of the first half to take a historic 55-42 win over Edwardsville in the Southwestern Conference opener for both teams Thursday night at Lucco-Jackson Gym.

This was the first Alton girls' basketball triumph over Edwardsville since 1998. It was a very competitive and scrappy game in which both teams played well, with the Redbirds being able to make their shots and the Tigers couldn't, which helped spell the difference.

It was an outstanding team effort by the Redbirds, who were led by both Powers and sophomore point guard Kiyoko Proctor, who added 14 points to help Alton gain the win. And the players who didn't even play had a key role in preparing the Redbirds for the match-up.

"I have to give credit to our whole squad tonight," Alton High School head girls' basketball coach Deserea Howard said. "The scouting report, girls that didn't even get into the game, they did their job all week preparing us for the game. Then our girls came out, they executed and they talked, they communicated. I've got to give all the team credit for this win because we couldn't have done it if everyone didn't step up and do their role all week."



The Tigers kept fighting, playing hard, and hung in for the entire game, giving the Redbirds a tough time.

"You know what? I'm really proud of our girls," said Edwardsville head coach Caty Happe. "First conference game, I'll be honest, I'll bet you a lot of people walking into this gym today didn't think we were going to be able to compete and we did. We showed that we can play at this level. There's a couple of things that we could have done better in that game, but I thought the kids played really hard and we showed a lot of good things tonight."

The missed shots the Tigers had were a key factor in the game.

"It was," Happe said. "They're tough to guard, they've got good shooters, they've got big posts. They did more to win tonight, but I'm excited to play them in the future and this group's going to continue to get better."

Although Edwardsville lost many key players to graduation, with three of them now playing Division-I basketball, the Tigers are continuing to work hard and come together. Kaitlyn Morningstar was one of the leaders on the night with 16 points and had an excellent game.

"Yeah, the seniors leading," Happe said. "Ellie (Neath) did a great job running the point, but really, everybody contributed to who got in and who didn't. This takes a lot to prepare for a team like that, and they did a great job."

Powers and Proctor scored the opening baskets for the Redbirds, with Alton maintaining a four-point lead throughout most of the opening period. Baskets from Emerson Weller and Morningstar brought Edwardsville back to an 8-8 tie and a pair of Neath free throws gave the Tigers a 10-8 lead. Near the end of the quarter, Alyssa Lewis hit a three from near the top to give Alton a 13-12 lead at the end of the first quarter.

The two teams opened the second quarter by trading threes from both Morningstar and Proctor, and a basket by Powers gave the Redbirds an 18-15 lead. Weller scored inside to make it 18-17, and from there, the Redbirds went on a 12-0 run to break open the game, with Proctor, Powers and Lewis all leading the way to extend the Redbird lead to 30-17 at halftime.

Alton scored the second half's opening points on a Powers basket to make it 32-17 and extended the run to 14-0, with Weller ending the string with a free throw that made it 32-18. The Redbirds got threes from both Kaylea Lacey and Proctor before a three by Morningstar put the score to 41-26 at three-quarters time.

The Redbirds kept their lead throughout the final quarter, leading by as much as 14 during the period, also hitting their free throws to maintain the margin, as Alton went on to their 55-42 win.

To go along with Powers' 20 and Proctor's 14 points, Alton got six points from Lewis, five points by Talia Norman, four points from Lacey and three points each from Kahliyah Goree and Laila Blakeny.

Morningstar led the Tigers with 16 points, while Neath scored 10 points, both Ashlyn Hauk and Weller had seven points apiece and Blakely Hockett scored two points.

"Yeah, we know it's going to be a fight," Howard said. "Edwardsville doesn't go out without a fight. We just wanted to be in the conversation and I think we made ourselves relevant. We're just going to take our time and enjoy this win tonight. Just really proud of the girls. We've got a good shootout coming up this weekend. Don't really have to do much changing into our scouting report. As I said, we put a lot of time and effort into this Edwardsville game, so we're just going to get back to work."

The Tigers are now 2-4 and host Rochester Saturday afternoon at 3:30 p.m. before going on the road to play at O'Fallon on Dec. 6 and Belleville East on Dec. 8 in a pair of 7:30 p.m. tip-offs before playing Okawville in the curtain raiser of the Scott Credit Union

Edwardsville Shootout Dec. 10 at 10:30 a.m. Happe knows that her team will continue to work hard and also feels that the Tigers are starting to come together as a team.

"I am and we have some really good things we need to work on," Happe said, "and they're fixable things, which is awesome. So we're going to get to practice, hopefully, fix some of those up for Saturday."

The Redbirds are now 4-0 on the season and play Mt. Vernon in their shootout Saturday morning at 11:30 a.m., then are at East St. Louis on Dec. 6 and host O'Fallon Dec. 8.





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