

Alton Picks Up Scrappy Win Over O'Fallon – Lady Redbirds Remain Unbeaten This Season

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
December 8 2022 9:44 PM



ALTON – “It wasn’t pretty,” Alton High School girl’s basketball coach Deserea Howard said after a hard-fought 40-36 win over the visiting O’Fallon Panthers Thursday night.

This Southwestern Conference tie was supposed to be an absolute barnburner on paper. Alton came in 6-0 and O'Fallon 7-1 on the season. But, with both teams missing some players for totally different reasons, the game kind of fizzled out.

Alton was missing a few players after an altercation with East St. Louis in the team's last game on Tuesday. After a bench-clearing scrum broke out with the Flyers, it led to some Redbirds being disqualified for some upcoming games. One of those players was a key starter, senior Laila Blakeny.

It was rumored that O'Fallon was without some of their bench after a few girls missed the bus ride.

"I think it frazzled both teams," Howard said. "But I think that's a good lesson for our girls. You always have to be ready; you never know what's going to happen."

Whatever the case may be, this game was still close until the very end.

The Redbirds jumped out to an early lead and were up 7-3 after the first quarter. The Panthers shrunk that lead down and only trailed by one at the half still down 13-12.

Alton narrowly outscored O'Fallon 15-14 in the third quarter. The Redbirds can thank sophomore Jarius Powers who went to work under the basket and scored 11 points during that frame.

Powers led the Redbirds in scoring finishing with 17 points on the night. She went 7-8 from the free-throw line.



Alton outlasted the Panthers in the fourth, but O’Fallon did make it interesting.

With 44 seconds left they were down 39-36. They inbounded the ball and got a three-point shot off, but it was short. The ball went out of play off of Alton so the Panthers had another opportunity to inbound with 17 seconds now remaining. They ended up turning the ball over and freshman Kaylea Lacey put the game away with her free throw at the other end.

“I think they like the fun finishes honestly,” Howard said jokingly after the game.

Alton is now 3-0 in the SWC and sit alone at the top of the standings. O’Fallon is now 7-2 on the season and second in the conference.

Senior Kiyoko Proctor, junior Alyssa Lewis, and Lacey each scored five points. Senior Khaliyah Goree and sophomore Talia Norman added four points each for Alton.

The Panthers were led by freshman shooting guard Haeli Tart’s nine-point performance.

“We’re working hard,” Howard said about her Redbirds. “I think we’re thinking a lot right now. We’re going to pull back a little bit and focus on what we’re doing well and less on what we’re not doing well. I saw a lot of thinking tonight and we don’t want

that, we want our girls to play free. That's going to be our plan for the next couple of days."

The Redbirds have a couple of non-conference games coming up on their horizon.

They will play Lutheran St. Charles on Saturday and then be back at home to face the Civic Memorial Eagles on Monday night. Alton's last game before the holiday break will be at home against Quincy on Dec. 20th.