

Lacey, Blakeny, And Lewis Lead Alton Past CM – Redbirds Remain Unbeaten

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
December 12 2022 10:09 PM



ALTON – Monday night was a matchup both teams had been waiting for. The Alton High School girls basketball team (9-0) hosted the Civic Memorial Eagles (7-3).

For the Redbirds, this one was a little personal.

“The losses to them really stung last year,” Alton head coach Deserea Howard said. “The last thing I did when I was preparing, I let the film run, and they sang ‘overrated’ as we left the gym, and tonight I really wanted to prove that we weren’t.”

Alton and CM played one another twice last season and the Eagles came out on top both times by scores of 51-48 and 54-38. This was CM’s first win over the Redbirds since 2009.

The game Monday night saw a large traveling CM fan section; however, they were sent home displeased.

Alton started off the game on a 7-2 run and kept a 16-11 lead after the first quarter.

The second quarter is when Alton really got going. They grew their lead to 25-13 before splashing three straight three-pointers before the half. At halftime they led 34-14, outscoring CM 18-3 in the second quarter alone.

Although CM tried to mount a comeback, Alton did not let it happen. They kept their foot on the gas and maintained a 20-point lead. After three quarters it was 50-30 Alton.

CM outscored the Redbirds 12-11 in the fourth, but it wasn’t enough to erase the large deficit. Alton went on to win the game by a score of 61-42.

Three players were in double digits for Alton. Freshman Kaylea Lacey led the way with 18 points, senior Laila Blakeny had 15, and junior Alyssa Lewis had 11. Sophomore Kiyoko Proctor added eight points.



Howard liked to see the variety in her offense.

“This is a team where any given night somebody can have 20 and it can be a different kid every night, so it was really cool to see them just kind of play their role tonight,” she said.

The Eagles are a three-point shooting team, and Alton did a great job of shutting down those looks.

Howard was especially pleased with her starting freshman.

“I knew we had a weapon in Lacey. She can jump out of the gym,” Howard said. “We wanted to prepare for this night, and she came out and really showed that she can defend a shooter and that makes us really special.”

“All the credit goes to Alton, they guarded us really well, they were a step quicker than we were tonight, and defensively they did a great job,” CM head coach Mike Arbuthnot said. “They hit some big shots and they played really well.”

For the Eagles, senior Olivia Durbin led with 16 points. She still managed to get off four successful three-pointers. Sophomore Meredith Brueckner had eight points and junior Avari Combes had seven.

It wasn't exactly part of his plan, but most of Arbuthnot's team got to see the floor, including senior Aubree Wallace who made her first start back this season. She played for about six minutes.



Down by such an amount late in the game, the CM coach thought why not put in some bench players to get everyone a little bit of playing time.

“You know, we’ve got some really young kids and I just wanted to give them some exposure out here against a real good athletic ball club like Alton,” coach Arb said.

“It makes you better. When we’re playing schools that have 2,400-2,500 kids, it’s a lot better playing them. That’s what this is all about, making us better, and getting us ready for conference and postseason. That’s why we play the schedule that we play.”

CM's schedule is built tough. They've got some away games against Teutopolis and Quincy Notre Dame and sooner than that they'll be in a tournament with teams like Edwardsville, Visitation, and Incarnate Word.

The loss to Alton snapped their current six-game winning streak.

The Eagles will be back in action on Thursday on the road against Highland.

As for the Redbirds, they're going to celebrate this win a little bit before getting back to work. They'll look to keep their win streak going when they host Belleville East on Thursday. Tip-off is set for 7:30 p.m.

"One of our goals was to be undefeated and it's nice to still be rolling through that," Howard said.