

Jones Provides Spark For Redbirds With 19 Points, Quincy Jumps To Big First Half Lead, Goes On To 67-41 Win Over Alton In First Round Of Classic

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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COLLINSVILLE - Tyruis Jones gave a big lift to Alton as he led the Redbirds with 19 points, but in the end, Quincy was able to jump to a big first-half lead in going on to defeat Alton 67-41 in the final opening round game of the 38th Prairie Farms Collinsville Holiday Classic boys basketball tournament Thursday night at Vergil Fletcher Gym in Collinsville.

The Blue Devils led 21-9 after the first quarter, then 37-16 at halftime in going on to the win, but the Redbirds kept working hard and showed a never-say-die spirit throughout the game, actually cutting the lead to 44-29 at the end of the third quarter, and played hard throughout the game.

"Overall, we could have played better," said Alton assistant coach Quail Townser, who ran the team in place of head coach Dylan Dudley on Wednesday night. "We had a few turnovers in the first half that really killed us. Outrebounded us by a lot, but overall, I feel pretty good about the kids' effort tonight. We've got to cut down on the turnovers and do a little better job rebounding."

Although the loss dropped Alton to 1-9 on the year, the players are still working hard in practice and giving their best efforts in the games.

"We still have kids show up every day for us," Townser said, "come in and do the work we ask them to do. We're just trying to get it to translate in the actual game itself. Just trying to have everyone buy into the program."

That the players are working and playing hard is a very good sign for the Redbirds indeed.

"Yeah, Tyrius had a good game tonight," Townser said. "He kind of sparked us in the second half, a spark that we needed, actually. The thing is we were down 20 at halftime, we came down in the third quarter and actually cut it down to 13. After that, in the fourth quarter, it just kind of opened up on us. We're just trying to get the kids to compete for all 32 minutes in the game."

Both teams opened the game with threes and baskets to tie the game 7-7 to start, with a three from Bradley Longcor III and a pair of baskets from Keshawn Thomas gave the Blue Devils a 14-7 lead. After an exchange of baskets, Longcor scored the final five points of the quarter to put Quincy up 21-9 after the first. The Blue Devils started the second quarter on a 7-0 run to go further ahead 28-9 before Hassani Elliott broke the run with a basket to make it 28-11. The Blue Devils responded with another 7-0 run on a three from Dom Clay and baskets from Thomas and Longcor to put Quincy ahead 35-11. Jones then scored the final five points of the period for Alton to pull within 37-16 at halftime.



The two teams traded threes to start the second half before Jones started to take over, scoring six points to pull Alton to within 41-26, with a basket at the third quarter buzzer by Elliott cutting the Blue Devil lead to 44-29. In the fourth quarter, Quincy went on a 10-5 run to start to push the lead back up to 54-34, then outscored the Redbirds 13-7 the rest of the way to gain the 67-41 win.

Longcor led the Blue Devils with 18 points, while Camden Brown, Thomas and Reid O'Brien all had 10 points apiece, Clay and Sam Mulherin scored six points each, Ralph Wires hit for five points and Mark Louthan scored two points. To go along with Jones' 19 points for the Redbirds, Kobe Taylor scored eight points, Elliott hit for seven points, Blake Hall and Junior Brown scored three points each and Chris Atkins had a single point.

Quincy is now 10-1 on the year and meets Collierville, Tenn., who defeated Triad 56-47 to advance, at Fletcher Gym, while Alton plays the Knights in the consolation quarterfinals in the auxiliary gym Thursday afternoon, with both games starting at 2:30 p.m.





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