

Alton finishes season with 27 wins; drops sectional title matchup to Normal 48-36

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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Alton faced its toughest opponent of the year in the IHSA Class 4A Pekin Sectional championship Friday night and came up on the short end 48-36.

The Redbirds fought the Ironmen until the end of the game, pulling to within seven points (39-32) with 4:30 left in the game on a Darrius Edwards field goal. Normal was too much at the end, outscoring Alton 9-4 for the final 48-36 outcome.



Alton coach Eric Smith said Normal was definitely a good basketball team.

“They (Normal) are pretty effective in the things they do,” he said. “Those two big kids they have (Tyler Seibring and Alex Peacock) are quite a combo. We didn’t necessarily stick with what made us successful. We got to the paint, but we settled more on jump shots.”

Normal head coach Dave Witzig said he planned to enjoy the huge win for his team with his players before the Tuesday night IHSA Class 4A Super Sectional game at Redbird Arena in Normal. Normal (31-1) will play Chicago Simeon 74-70 winner over Chicago St. Rita in the Blue Island Eisenhower Sectional.

“We are excited to be playing in March,” he said. “When you get to the Elite 8, you play some great teams.”

[Photo Gallery: Alton Redbirds vs. Normal - Pekin Sectional](#)

Normal led 13-4 at the end of first quarter. Alton crept to within 17-11 after a Darrius Edwards bucket in the second quarter. Normal pulled ahead to lead 26-14 at the half.

Normal continued to take control of the game and pushed to a 38-21 advantage at the end of three quarters.

Alton’s Isaiah Thurmond hit a basket with 4:30 left in the game to close the lead to 39-32 Normal.

Alton concludes the season with 27-5 record.

Bryan Hudson, the Alton senior center, will quickly exchange his basketball shoes for baseball cleats as ace pitcher for the Redbirds this spring. He and the other Alton players took the loss hard, but he said he was proud of the effort the team put forth against Normal.

“They (Normal) were all-around the best team we played all year,” he said. “They shot the ball really well. It is our senior year. I am now looking forward to the baseball season.”

Thurmond and Darrius Edwards led the Redbirds with eight points apiece; Carlos Anderson and Hudson each had six points and Maurice Edwards contributed five points.

Seibring and Peacock had 13 points each for Normal Community High School. Zack Thompson added eight points.

Smith praised his players for a nice run this season, winning 27 games.

“The most important part is our kids fought until the bitter end and they kept swinging,” he said. “That makes us proud of what the kids have accomplished this year.”

The Alton coach said he couldn’t have asked for his players to work harder than they did since he arrived.

“They have worked four days a week since I have been here,” he said. “They deserve the success that came their way. It is sad it had to end, but I am just extremely proud of the kids.”





