

Edwardsville, Alton, Continue Busy Schedules Next Week

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
January 14 2023 7:32 AM



EDWARDSVILLE - Edwardsville and Alton's boys' basketball teams both play in tournaments next week.

The Tigers will be playing in the Jersey Mid-Winter Classic round-robin tournament next week at Havens Gym, going against Cahokia on Tuesday, Granite City on Wednesday at 6 p.m. both nights and the host Panthers next Friday at 7:30 p.m. Battas is looking ahead to the tournament.

"We're excited to go up there," Tigers' Coach Dustin Battas said. "We get to play Cahokia, Granite City and Jerseyville. That tournament has been good to us the last few years. We've played Cahokia before and getting to play Granite City, an old Southwestern Conference rival and then Jerseyville, who's always a good program, so we're looking forward to it. Just happy for our guys and I think we're playing our best basketball of the season and we're getting everything heading in the right direction, so we're just looking forward to next week."

The Redbirds will be playing in the Chick-Fil-A Belleville East Classic next week, opening on Tuesday at 6 p.m. against Belleville Althoff Catholic and will also be getting Prince Clanton-El back to the team for the first time this season. Coach Dudley Giberson is looking forward to the tournament and having his full team back.

"Yeah, we'll get our full team back on Tuesday when we go to Althoff," Dudley said. "Prince will be back, we've got our full team. so that'll be the first game we've played with our full team. There is some excitement to see what our full team looks like. Does that mean we're going to win? I don't know. Does that mean we're going to lose? I don't know. I don't worry about that stuff. I worry about how we come to practice, how we handle getting up tomorrow and handle weightlifting and how we handle Special Olympics that we have to do. But we'll see what happens on Tuesday. No one's going to stop fighting. Definitely not me, definitely not our coaching staff; that's not how we were built, that's now how we were raised. So we'll hang in there, we'll put our head down, we'll go to work and we'll see what happens."

Dudley also had a message to the Redbird supporters as well.

"I appreciate our fans that are hanging in there with us," Dudley said. "I appreciate the ones in our community that are about the right stuff. I appreciate the ones in the community that are trying to help our kids get to where they want them go get to. It doesn't go unnoticed. Myself and the coaching staff. we notice the good and the bad. So those that are supporting us through these tough times and hanging in there with our kids, that's what this is about. It's about these kids, it's not about us as adults. This is about trying to put these kids in the best position to be successful. We're going to keep doing that and we appreciate everyone in our community that's hanging in there with us and trying to support these kids."

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