

Redbirds Drop Final Home Game To Maroons – Have Tough Ask Come Postseason

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
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ALTON – Things didn't go Alton's way in the second half during their Senior Night game against the Belleville West Maroons Friday night.

After being up by five at halftime, the Redbirds lost by 20, falling by a score of 65-45. They slip to 5-22 on the season and 0-11 in the Southwestern Conference.

The threes were falling early on for Alton with seniors Prince Clanton-el and Byron Stampley both netting one in the game's opening minutes. The game started off a back-and-forth battle with Belleville West up 15-12 after the first quarter.

Alton quickly gained some momentum when Clanton-el's three-pointer tied it and then Stampley's three took the lead at 18-15. The Redbirds kept that pace and led 28-23 heading into the locker rooms.

It was a 12-0 run from the Maroons to kick off the second half that got them back into the game and gave them a 35-28 lead. Still, Alton battled on and thanks to Stampley's buzzer-beater three the Redbirds were only down 40-38 after three quarters.

Alton was outscored 25-10 in the final frame with the Maroons at one point going on a 20-2 run.

Belleville West went on to its 13th win of the season bringing them to 3-7 in the SWC.

Stampley was the only Redbird in double digits with 20 points. Blake Hall added nine and Clanton-el finished with six.

The Maroons had four double-figure scorers. Brandon Scott led all scorers with 25 points while Daylen Byrd had 11. Jordan Lacey and Myles Liddell each scored 10.

"Tale of two halves," Alton head coach Dylan Dudley said postgame.

"I'm really disappointed in our effort in the fourth quarter. After that run in the third quarter, we still managed to hang around. We executed our play at the end of the third quarter and make a huge shot. We're down two points, it's our ball, at home, on Senior Night, against a team that's trying to fight and get better the same way as we are, and then in the fourth quarter, we didn't have any fight," Dudley added.

The Redbirds have three regular-season games left and are back in action quickly. They'll make the long trip over to Teutopolis to take on a struggling Althoff Catholic team before wrapping up the season against MICDS and Collinsville.

After being seeded as the No. 8 in their respected sub-sectional, the Redbirds will take on the No. 1-seeded Quincy Blue Devils (22-4) up in Quincy on Feb. 22 at 6 p.m. in the Regional Semifinals.

"They're really really good," Dudley said.

He asks his team: "Are we going to finish it the right way?"

“The pressure is not on us. There’s not one person in the state of Illinois that thinks we can win that game. I think we can win that game. Do those guys in there believe that they can win,” he asks.

“That’s our challenge as a coaching staff over the next two weeks, to get them ready to believe that they can win to give ourselves a chance. That’s all you can ask. Go up there and lay it on the line.”

“Hey, you play your best and they beat you, cool. You play your best and come up one point short, cool. You play your best and you win, guess what, we’ll play again on Friday. We just have to continue to utilize these next two, or three weeks to put our heads down and continue to get better and continue to grow in all areas,” Dudley finished with.