

Redbirds Open Season With Shutout Victory Over Mascoutah

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
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MASCOUTAH – “A win, a shutout, a good way to start the season,” Alton girls soccer head coach Gwen Sabo said after a 2-0 win over the Mascoutah Indians in the season-opener Monday night.

“First game jitters, a little inorganization to be expected, it’s a new group, but overall I see some good things. I see a lot of things we can build upon.”

“I am pleasantly surprised with the way we played,” Sabo said.

This was the first of three Metro Cup games that Alton will play to begin its regular season. This one was played in some constant wind and frigid temperatures, but the Redbirds started out hot.

It took only 17 minutes for Alton to find the back of the net and it came from a familiar face.

Sophomore Lyndsey Miller, who scored 10 goals and had 12 assists her freshman year, put the Redbirds on the board early. She noticed the Mascoutah keeper was a bit off her goal line and with the wind at her back, she let a shot go from about 25 yards out that lobbed the keeper to take the 1-0 lead.

Miller had a good chance earlier on in the 8th minute when she took another shot from distance that forced a save from the Mascoutah keeper.

After the goal, Alton had to sustain a lot of pressure from the Indians, but the Redbirds' back line stood tall.

“My back line, especially my center backs, overall did a good job,” Sabo said.

The Redbirds took their one-goal lead into the halftime break.

Just over 10 minutes into the second half Alton doubled its lead. The team's leading goal scorer last season, Emily Baker (31 goals), opened her account with a stellar solo effort.

She got the ball toward the sideline before taking a few touches, getting past a defender, and chipping it over the Mascoutah goalie into the side netting. The goal seemingly came out of nowhere, but the Redbirds weren't complaining.

They maintained the ball a lot better in the second half and had a couple more quality opportunities.

One of those chances came in the final few minutes when Miller ran onto a through ball. She beat a defender and then dribbled it around the keeper but didn't get enough contact to get the ball into the net. A racing Mascoutah defender made a great goal-line clearance to keep it out.

Junior Jada Bruce got the lone assist on the night for Alton.

Senior goalie Peyton Baker wasn't tested too much in net but did what she needed to do to preserve the shutout. She had 11 shutouts a season ago.

Prior to the season, Sabo was a little worried about some of the gaps she had to fill in her lineup after some 2022 graduates and others are no longer with the team.

Said gaps weren't very noticeable Monday night. Sabo said that some things were sloppy and could be cleaned up but was overall happy with the outing.

The Redbirds continue play in the Metro Cup in their next game on Wednesday. They'll be taking on Springfield at 5:45 p.m. at Edwardsville Sports Complex.