

Redbirds Battle But Fall Short Against Granite City

by Nathan Tucker, Sports Reporter
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EAST ALTON - The Warriors of Granite City made their way up Illinois Route 3 Tuesday night to take on the Alton Redbirds at East Alton Ice Arena. A matchup of a 2A power in Granite coming up against an Alton team still looking for consistency in results.

The Redbirds battled, but just couldn't keep up with the offensive onslaught from the Warriors, who peppered Alton netminder Caiden Jockish with 46 shots on their way to a 4-3 win.



Ayden Cooper was first on the scoresheet less than three minutes in, and Tannan Nenninger joined him about five and a half minutes later. Just over halfway through the first period, Alton found themselves down by two goals and somewhat behind the eight ball.

“I don't think (Caiden Jockish) was seeing the puck very well in that first period, or they weren't bouncing his way,” said Alton head coach Bryan Clark. “But sometimes you gotta let ‘em fight through that, and I thought he did a really good job of fighting through that tonight.”



Indeed he did, after giving up two goals on twelve shots in the first frame, Jockish stopped 31 of the next 33 shots he faced.

“46 shots, I’m not too happy about that,” said Clark. “But (Jockish) kept us in the game.”

Cooper added his second of the night and sixth of the season in the second period to give the visitors a 3-0 lead, but Alton answered right back with two quick goals, both scored by Keller Jacobs.

Jacobs improved his goal total to eight on the young campaign, and put his Redbirds right back in the contest with a lot of hockey to play.

“The way that the boys came out and battled against a good (Granite) team, I’m definitely proud of that,” Clark said.

Granite City’s Ben Wilson scored the fourth for the visitors just after the halfway mark in the second period, a period in which the Warriors slung a whopping 21 pucks on Jockish’s goal.

“All credit to their goaltender,” said Granite City head coach Darin Kimble. “He played well, and to get 47 shots on him, and only give up four goals, really good job by him. (Alton) fought back and made it really close at the end.”

As the NHL veteran Kimble alludes to, Alton fought back and made it a tight contest late. Caden Clark buried a shot on a rush to make it a one goal game in the third period with just two and a half minutes remaining.

The Redbirds piled on the pressure in the final moments, but the Warriors held on for the final buzzer. With the win, Granite City improves to 10-3-2 on the season.

“We’ve ran into Edwardsville a couple of times and they’re a pretty good hockey club, and we’ve got O’Fallon next week,” said Granite head coach Darin Kimble postgame. “Those teams are the top of the class right now, and we’ve been there ourselves the last four years, but things are changing. We have to see if we can play with these guys.”



Alton falls to 5-7-2 on the season so far, but head coach Bryan Clark wants to see more performances like he saw Tuesday night.

“We’re a young team, we’re going to have our ups and downs,” said Clark following the loss. “But taking this approach we had tonight, coming out and battling hard and grinding, some nights are going to go our way, sometimes they’re not. But there were a lot of victories within this game, in my opinion.”