

Lady Redbirds Rout Belleville West In Highland Tourney Opening Round

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
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HIGHLAND – The Lady Redbirds improved to 20-1 on the season after a massive 91-21 win over Belleville West in the opening round of the 37th Annual Highland Girls Basketball Tournament.

Alton moves into the quarterfinals where it will take on Okawville, [57-50 winners over Civic Memorial](#) in its first-round game. It will be a rematch of last year's championship game when the [Redbirds won 54-38](#).

According to Alton head coach Deserea Howard, it won't be personal.

"We're really focused on taking care of ourselves," she said. "We enjoy this tournament, the bracket's a little interesting, but we're going to do what we've got to do."

Saturday morning, with 10 a.m. tip-off, Alton came out firing against Belleville West.

Alyssa Lewis drilled a three just 24 seconds into the game, but West's Kennedy Williams was quick to tie it back up with a three of her own.

Alton scored the game's next 15 points to get to an 18-3 lead and eventually a 21-5 lead after one.

Howard didn't let up as the game went on. Sure, she put her bench in, but she let them just do their thing.

"Of course, we're not trying to run up the score on anybody, but we've got to make sure we're teaching our young girls to keep the same standards as the starters," Howard said.

The Redbirds outscored West 24-6 in the second quarter, mainly with their bench players.

Alton got 25 points from the bench. Four of the five starters finished in double-digit scoring.

Jarius Powers led all scorers with 17 points followed by Kiyoko Proctor, last year's tournament MVP, with 16 points, Alyssa Lewis with 13 points, and Kaylea Lacey with 12 points.

Kyridas Orr led the bench with nine points while Madeline Ducey and Talia Norman each scored eight. Meyonna Banks and Aryanna Anthony each scored three points and Jakayla Steen had two.

The Redbirds ended up with 10 different scorers.

It was also a good defensive effort, only allowing the Maroons 21 points.

"Our focus lately has just been on boxing out and taking care of the ball. Playing hard no matter what the score is," Howard said.

The Redbirds, ranked No. 3 in IHSA Class 4A by the Associated Press, will take on the Okawville Rockets, who are ranked No. 6 in Class 1A, in the quarterfinals on Monday, Jan. 15 at 7 p.m.