

Lewis Leads Five Players In Double Figures With 15 Points, Alton Reels Off 50-0 Run In First Half, Defeats Granite 83-15

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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COLLINSVILLE - Alyssa Lewis led five players in double figures for top-seeded Alton with 15 points, as the Redbirds went on a 50-0 run in the first half, including all 24 points in the second quarter, in going on to an 83-15 win over Granite City in the first semifinal of the IHSA Class 4A girls basketball Collinsville regional Monday night at Vergil Fletcher Gym.

The Redbirds went on their run after the Warriors had tied the game 2-2 early in the first quarter, Granite not scoring again until 10 seconds into the third quarter on a three by Gabby Semple. Alton outscored the Warriors in the first quarter 28-2, and 24-0 in the second quarter on their way to the win.

"We are focused on executing one game at a time," said Redbirds head coach Deserea Howard. "We are excited about the win. I thought everyone stepped up, and played quality minutes to start off on the playoff run."

And although the Warriors lost heavily to Alton, who's currently ranked second in the Illinois Associated Press Class 4A poll this week, the team didn't give up, nor did they surrender, playing hard to the end.

"We feel fantastic," said Granite head coach Greg Vaughn. "We're proud of our girls, and we want to tip our caps to the Alton Redbirds. They're a fantastic team, we want to

see them go a long way in the tournament, maybe bring home a trophy. We're lucky to go up against such a great team, it's a great measuring stick to see where our girls are, and how far we've come in a season. The trademark of our team is that we never give up, we play with a little grit and intensity, and we'll take on any opponent if we get the chance."





The Warriors' season ends at 2-25, but the effort was there all throughout the campaign, and there is nothing to be ashamed about the team's endeavors in 2023-24, especially on a night where the Redbirds were firing on all cylinders.

"Absolutely," Vaughn said, "and again, I want to commend (Howard), and all the work they've done with their program through the years. They've been building to this for a long time. And yeah, I look back over this season, and I can recount easily seven, eight, maybe even 10 games that we were in, had a chance, the ball bounces one way instead of the other, maybe bring home a W in those games. But again, I'm proud of my girls, and all that we've accomplished."

it was a young team, with three freshmen and four sophomores on the roster, but the Warriors kept working hard, and did provide Vaughn with some good memories he'll take into the off-season.

"I think the overall growth," Vaughn said. "We're a very young team, although we did have good senior leadership. They've been with us a little bit. Overall, we're a young team, starting a couple of freshmen. I saw a lot of highlights and a lot of positives from them, as well as our sophomores as well. So, I think going forth in the next couple of years, we're going to be a force to reckon with."

The future of Warriors' girls basketball is indeed bright, according to Vaughn.

"Absolutely, absolutely," Vaughn said. "A lot of young players, and we're going to get after it, right back in the gym after a short time off."

Talia Norman and Emily Sykes traded baskets to open the game at 2-2, and after Norman scored again to make it 4-2, the Redbirds began to pull away, scoring the last 26 points in the first quarter. Kiyoko Proctor, Lewis, Kaylea Lacey, Jarius Powers, and Norman all had the baskets as the Redbirds took a 28-2 lead after the first.

It was all Redbirds in the second quarter too as Allison Pruitt joined in the scoring as Alton scored all 24 points in the period to take a 52-2 lead at halftime.

Semple hit a three 10 seconds into the second half to break the string and make the score 52-5, also getting a basket from Thylee Simms to make it 56-7, and another basket from Sykes to make the score 62-9.

The Warriors broke into double figures on a pair of Simms free throws, and a basket from Sykes and another Simms free throw made it 70-14 before a Kourtnee Evans basket at the buzzer gave the Redbirds a 72-14 lead at the end of the third quarter.

The fourth quarter was played under the running clock rule, as the Redbirds outscored Granite 11-1 to take the 83-15 win.

Lewis led the Redbirds with 15 points, while Powers had 14 points, Proctor hit for 13 points, Norman scored 11 points, Madeleine Ducey had nine points, Pruitt scored seven points, Lacey had six points, Meyonna Banks had three points, Evans and Aryonna Anthony had two points each, and Kyridas Orr had a single point.

Sykes led the Warriors with eight points, while both Semple and Simms had three points each, and Avery Wallace scored a single point.

The Redbirds are now 29-2, and will meet Edwardsville, a 59-35 winner over the host Kahoks, in the final Friday night at 6 p.m. T

he winner moves on to the Normal Community sectional, where they'll meet the O'Fallon regional winner - either Quincy or the Panthers --- in a neutral-site game next Tuesday, Feb. 20, with the site and time to be announced.





[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)