

Alton, Breese Mater Dei tie in hard-fought soccer battle

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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ALTON – **Alton and Breese Mater Dei** took each other on in a hard-fought soccer match at Gordon Moore Park Wednesday night.

In the end, both coaches felt the final result – a 1-1 draw – was a fair result.

“Alton's got a good team,” said Knight coach James Arnold. “They play some pretty good competition in their conference (the Southwestern) against teams like Edwardsville

and we're a much smaller school. I'm glad we got a result tonight; it wasn't quite the result we would have liked, but it is a fair result.

“We had some good opportunities in the first half and played with them in the second, so we're happy with that.”

“This time of the year, wins are precious,” said Redbird coach Jay Robertson, “especially with the playoffs around the corner. “We were wanting to keep the ball at our feet tonight and we did that pretty well in the first half; the second half, we could have done better at it, but the last 10 minutes we did all right on that.

“They were playing at a fast pace and things did get a bit chippy out there, but we played hard and kept going.”

Mater Dei's main goal was to shut down the Redbirds' Eric Ferenbach, one of the area's top goal-scorers, and in Arnold's' eyes, “we did a pretty good job of that. He's a quality player and we knew we had to shut him down.”

While Ferenbach was held goaleless on the night, Alton's Skylar Funk wasn't; he gave the Redbirds the lead in the 20th minute when he charged into the Knights' end and fired a shot that got past Mater Dei goalkeeper Garret Boeckerman.

Play remained somewhat tight, but both teams did have good chances to score the remainder of the first half. In the second half, Mater Dei seemed to gain control and put some chances on goal; it paid off near the hour when Alex Loepker got a feed off to Adam Gall, who made no mistake and scored to tie proceedings at 1-1.

Both teams had chances to take the lead, but none of them were successful and the match ended in the draw.

The Redbirds went to 8-4-3 on the season with the draw and will host Edwardsville at 6:30 p.m. Thursday in a rescheduled SWC match; Tuesday's original match date was postponed because of heavy rain that hit the area during the JV match.

Another Redbird match that had been abandoned in September against O'Fallon will be replayed from the start Oct. 13, either at Gordon Moore Park or at Alton High's new soccer facility.

