



Ridenhour guides Panthers past Redbirds 1-0 in soccer match

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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ALTON – Monday night wasn't the easiest of nights for **Alton's boys soccer team**.

Eight minutes into their match against Jersey, the Redbirds lost leading scorer Eric Ferenbach to an ankle injury.

Forty-eight minutes into the match, they lost Nick Hatfield when he was sent off in the wake of an incident near the center of the field.

And, thanks to a 24th-minute goal from Jake Ridenhour, the Redbirds took a 1-0 loss to the Panthers.

All in all, not the easiest night for the Redbirds, who fell to 9-5-3 on the year; the Panthers went to 13-3 on the season with the win.

“It was a tough match,” Panther coach Scott Burney said. “It was very, very physical. The boys played pretty well early; both teams got tired and got a little sloppy at the end, but we got the goal. We weren't sure if that was going to be enough, but we were able to hold on to that zero on the scoreboard at the end.”

Burney knew the Redbirds were going to be a tough assignment for his side. “They're a real good team,” Burney said of the Redbirds. “That's a real nice win for us; we knew it was going to be a tough match. We were looking forward to it and the boys were ready.”

Ridenhour's goal came on a heads-up play; he got the ball from a feed from Alex Roth and streaked in to score past Alton goalkeeper Devin Colley.

“The kid (Ridenhour) broke through on defense, made a nice run to the middle; he just got by our last guy and went in and put it away,” said Redbird coach Jay Robertson. “The other kid (Roth) played a nice through-ball to him and he put it away.”

The Redbirds' loss of Ferenbach didn't help their cause either; Ferenbach is the team's leading scorer with 18 goals on the season thus far.

“Obviously, it never helps when your leading scorer goes out,” Robertson said. “But we do have other kids who have contributed quite a bit this year who can put the ball away as well.

“We still looked to push and even when we were a man down (following Hatfield's sending-off), we still pushed the ball downfield pretty good.”

“My teammate made a really good through-ball,” Ridenhour said of his goal. “I was just at the right place.”

“Alton kept coming at us,” Burney said. “They were bringing up their d-backs, bringing up their speed; they had some looks but our guys closed them up very quickly.”

Both teams have big conference games coming up this evening; the Redbirds travel to Belleville West for a key Southwestern Conference match, while the Panthers host Highland in a Mississippi Valley Conference clash.

“We'll just come out tomorrow night and get ready to play,” Robertson said. “It's a big conference game, but we've had our times when we've had some down games this year and we just came back and played.”

“(Highland) was one of our three losses on our schedule, so we want to get that one back,” Burney said. “Then we have another tough (MVC) match against Triad and we have another Southwestern Conference school in Granite City next week.”