

Host Eagles, Altamont lead balanced field at St. Elmo Tournament

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Heading in to the 53rd annual St. Elmo Holiday Tournament, despite the seeding of the bracketed event, there appears to be no “lock” to win the title.

In fact there look to be no easy games as even the favorites will have to worry about opening round contests.

Head coach Greg Feezel and his defending champion **St. Elmo Eagles** haven't soared out of the blocks this season. The Eagles are sitting at 3-2 overall with wins over North Clay, South Central and Neoga. However the hosts have dropped a pair of road games at Cowden-Herrick and Effingham St. Anthony in its last two outings.

Levi Maxey and Conner Beasley have led the way for the Eagles, but they are still trying to get better after sending away four senior starters from back-to-back regional championship teams.

Maxey is a 6-foot junior guard who is leading the way so far with 15.4 p.p.g. Beasley, a 6-foot-4 senior, is chipping in 13.4 a night along with 10.4 rebounds.

A third starter averaging double-figures is Garrett Bartels, a 6-foot-1 senior, who is at 10.3 points a contest.

On the other hand, the **Altamont Indians** have gotten off to a great start under new head coach John Niebrugge. The Tribe sits at 4-0 with wins over Brownstown, Cumberland, Windsor and South Central. Altamont is now 3-0 in the National Trail Conference.

Garrett Ziegler, a 6-foot junior, is the top gunner for the Indians at 17 points a night for Coach Niebrugge while dishing out 1.5 assists.

Derek Jahraus, a 6-foot-2 junior, is averaging 10.3 points a night.

He notched 16-points and 14-rebounds in a 85-66 win over Brownstown back on November 30.

Six-foot-two senior Ryan Mayhaus is adding 9.5 points and 11.3 rebounds a contest while Jake Seidel, a 6-foot-4 junior forward, has added seven points a game.

John Kuhns is a 6-foot-3 senior (8.8 p.p.g.) is part of a big front line that is muscling opponents on the boards.

The Indians are averaging 16 more rebounds per contest than their opposition in those four victories.

Defense and rebounding, the staples of the very successful Teutopolis program of which Coach Niebrugge is an alum, was built on keeping teams off the glass.

Cowden-Herrick is sitting at 6-2 with losses to Patoka and Christ Our Rock Lutheran at the Ramsey Thanksgiving Tournament. However the Hornets have responded with a four-game winning streak. One of the victories was a 52-50 win over St. Elmo back on December 4.

Coach Bruce Manola took over the program this season and after a first week struggle, the Hornets are playing well heading into the tournament.

Luke Moore, a 6-foot-2 forward, 6-foot forward Tyson Morgason, 5-foot-8 guard Caleb Heiserman and 6-foot-1 forward Seth Barnes are all veterans in this senior led roster.

Morgason scored 12-points in the St. Elmo triumph while Moore netted 10.

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Moore, a three-year starter for the Hornets, leads the club with 17.1 points a night.

Morgason is second on the C-H scoring sheet with 9.0 points while senior Ethan Schoonover has added 8.4 p.p.g. Barnes has added 7.3 points a game and Heiserman has added 6.1 points so far for a very productive offensive (65.4 p.p.g.).

Brownstown began the season with a “bang” in winning the Ramsey/Mulberry Grove Thanksgiving Tournament “Super Saturday” with a final game win over Christ Our Rock Lutheran. They also have wins over Odin, Sandoval (2) and Mulberry Grove.

But the Bombers have dropped two-straight NTC games to Altamont and Windsor are are 5-2 on the young season.

Coach Vince Rohr's team has put up some offensive numbers but defensively they will need to get better, having given up 63 points a game on average.

Matt Sefton is leading the Bombers with 23.8 points a contest.

Austin Hunter is averaging 17.8 p.p.g. while Jacob Behrens adds 15.3.

Sefton is a 5-foot-11 playmaker for Coach Rohr while Hunter is a 6-foot-5 frontcourt specialist who can run the floor. Behrens is a 6-foot junior guard.

Five-foot-eleven guard Doug Krueger and 6-foot-2 Donovan Riley are the leading scorers for Jason Eirhart's **Beecher City Eagles**, who are 1-3 in the season with a win over Ramsey and losses to rivals Cowden-Herrick, Dieterich and Effingham St. Anthony.

Krueger is putting in 13.8 points a game for the Eagles while Riley adds 13.2 p.p.g.

Brady Barnes, a 6-foot-1 junior, is also scoring some points for BC, chipping in 12.8 points.

Riley is the top rebounding Eagle, grabbing seven a night. Blake McKay, a 5-foot-10 senior guard, is averaging 3.8 assists per outing.

South Central (1-3) has also had some struggles. Coach Rick Simmons has relied on Fischer Tharp, a 6-foot-3 senior and four-year starter. Tharp is averaging 21 points a game for the Cougars, who have a win over Odin coupled with losses to Vandalia, St. Elmo and Altamont.

Rudy Hablewitz, a 5-foot-11 senior guard, tosses in 8.3 points a contest so far in 2012-13. Senior guards 6-foot Joey Rose and 5-foot-10 Austin Schwarm has also chipped in.

Mulberry Grove and **Ramsey** enter the tournament with mirrored records of 1-6.

The Rams are led in scoring and rebounding by Tylor Knisley, a 5-foot-9 junior guard, who has posted 12.8 points and eight rebounds.

Six-foot-three senior Colton Hunt has increased his numbers from last winter, averaging seven points a game.

The Aces will hope to have a good week at the event as Coach Bobby Koontz will again need Devonta Williamson to come up big. Williamson is a 5-foot-10 junior guard (7.9 p.p.g.) along with Jordan Miller (5.3 p.p.g.) and Christian Dawson (5.4 p.p.g.) have led the way. Five-foot-ten sophomore Damian Latham has pitched in 6.9 points a night.

Jack Bullock is the editor/web publisher of **A Baseline View.com**. Southern Illinois' Only Boy's High School Basketball Web Publication providing Previews, Rankings, Schedules, Scores, Standings and Tournament Information for over 100-teams.