

## Redbirds Defeat Morehead State 77-67 in First Round of CBI

**NORMAL, Ill.** - Illinois State guard Daishon Knight led four players in double-figures with 18 points, as the Redbirds pulled away in the second half for a 77-67 defeat of Morehead State in the first round of the College Basketball Invitational Wednesday night on Doug Collins Court at Redbird Arena.

With the win, the Redbirds will remain at home to host a CBI quarterfinal game Monday, March 24, against Texas A&M. The Aggies will be the first-ever Southeastern Conference (SEC) opponent to play at Redbird Arena and only the second (Mississippi in 1978) to play in Normal, Ill. ISU is 1-0 all-time versus Texas A&M, with the Redbirds winning 74-66 in overtime on Dec. 21, 1984, at the American Savings Classic in Stockton, Calif.

Bobby Hunter finished the game with 16 points, including an 8-for-10 effort from the free throw line, and Nick Zeisloft chipped in 13 points thanks to a 3-for-6 effort from behind the arc. Reggie Lynch rounded out the Redbird quartet in double figures with 12 points to go along with eight rebounds and three blocks.

The Eagles maintained a small single-digit lead over the first six-plus minutes of the game, before Daishon Knight drilled a three-pointer from the top of the key to give the Redbirds their first lead of the game at 8-7 with 13:13 left in the first half. The two teams then traded baskets, until Knight connected from three-point range for the second time in the half to put ISU up 18-15 and a three-pointer by Nick Zeisloft extended the lead to six points at 21-15 with just over six minutes left in the first half. Illinois State would not trail for the remainder of the game.

Brent Arrington then connected on a jumper to cut the lead back down to four points at 21-17 on the next possession, but five-straight points from Tony Wills on a layup and a three-pointer gave ISU a nine-point lead at 26-17. A three-point play by Hunter extended the Redbird run to 15-2 and gave ISU a double-digit lead for the first time in the game at 29-17 with 4:23 left on the clock.

Morehead State chipped away at the lead and cut it to single digits at 29-23, after Billy Reader converted a three-point play and Angelo Warner connected from behind the arc with just over two minutes left in the half. John Jones, who returned to the lineup from injury for the first time since Jan. 25, put an exclamation point on the first 20 minutes of play with an alley-oop dunk from Kaza Keane to give ISU a 33-25 lead at the break.

The Eagles came out of the locker room on a 12-5 run to cut the ISU to one at 38-37. Knight then scored five-straight points for the Redbirds, via his third three-pointer of the game and a pair of free throws, to make the score 43-37 four minutes into the second half. ISU maintained a single-digit lead until Zeisloft connected on a three-pointer, his third of the game, to put the Redbirds up 55-45 with nine minutes left. A dunk by Jones a minute later extended the lead to 57-46, but Storey answered with his second trey of the contest to cut the ISU lead to eight at the under eight minute time out.

The lead would grow to as many as 18 points at 71-53 after a tip-in by Lynch with 2:40 left in the game and ISU would cruise the rest of the way and secure the victory. Game time is yet to be determined for Monday's contest, but tickets for the game will go on sale Thursday morning at 9 a.m. at the Redbird Arena ticket office, on GoRedbirds.com, or by calling (309) 438-8000. The cost is \$5 for students, \$10 for upper bowl tickets and \$15 for lower bowl tickets.

