

Edwardsville hockey team belts Triad 9-2 in match

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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GRANITE CITY – Edwardsville's hockey team was sure they were going to face a much more difficult challenge going up against Triad when the Knights came up on the Tiger schedule.

For a time even at the start of the game, the two teams battled each other on even terms. In the end, though, Edwardsville took advantage of some Triad miscues down the stretch and went on to take a 9-2 win in a Mississippi Valley Club Hockey Association game at Wilson Park Ice Rink in Granite City Tuesday night.

“It was excellent energy on our part; we had a good game plan and we stuck to our focus and our discipline,” **Knight coach Pat Culiberk** said. “Penalties got the best of us; you can't sit for 12 minutes in the box and play against a team that's got speed. We've got to be smarter.

“For us to go out and strike first was a great win for us. That was a great accomplishment for us to go out and get that first goal.”

“They came out hard,” said **Tiger coach Jason Walker**. “They had a plan and they played very, very well the first half; it caused us a few problems, but the big thing was sticking with it and I thought the guys did a good job of sticking with it. We eventually broke through there.”

Triad actually threw a scare into the Tigers and their fans, and it only took 13 seconds for them to do it when Blake Takmajian found Kyle Kowalksi with a pass; Kowalski then beat Edwardsville goalie Mathew Griffin, and all of a sudden, the Knights led at 1-0.

“It's definitely not the start you want,” Walker said, “but these guys have been around; we've got a pretty veteran team and I don't think anyone was worried. It was just, 'let's regroup and play our game'.”

After that first goal, the two teams battled and tried to find something that would poke a hole in the other's defense. It took until almost the end of the first period, but the Tigers finally found a hole and Connor Stewart took advantage to tie the game with 42.9 seconds left. Lucas Tucker then gave the Tigers their first lead just 31 seconds into the second period off an assist from John Teske, but the Kowalski-Takmajian duo countered 33 seconds after the Tucker goal to draw Triad level again at 2-2.

Edwardsville finally took the lead for good at 6:40 of the second when Stanley Lucas scored, and Trevor Henson extended the lead to 4-2 when he scored with 33.7 seconds left.

The Tigers asserted themselves in the third period when Henson got his second goal nearly two minutes in, followed by goals from Jake Aurelio, a power-play goal from Tyler Hinterset, a short-handed goal from Christian Blandina and a power-play goal from Tyler Schaeffer.

Despite the loss, Culiberk said that the next time the two teams get together, it should be another battle. “We just have to work on a couple of things, clean up some of our shortcomings and we'll be good,” Culiberk said. “Next time we see them, it'll be a great battle just like this one.”

The Tigers take on O'Fallon at 7 p.m. Wednesday at East Alton Ice Arena.

