

Abby Crabtree goal, tight defense lead Tigers over Normal Community

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – A tight defense can make all the difference, regardless of the sport.

Edwardsville's girls soccer team has relied on a veteran defensive back line this season, and that defense – headed by **Jane Ann Crabtree and Mallory Mushill** – helped make a late first-half goal from **Abby Crabtree** stand up as the Tigers downed Normal Community 1-0 in a non-conference match at Tiger Stadium Saturday afternoon.

“The past couple of days, we've been struggling to put the ball in the goal, but we were able to get that one in,” said **Tiger coach Abby Comerford**. “Our defense certainly held up the back for them not to score.

“We rely on Mallory and Jane Ann back there; not only that, Regan (Windau, the freshman goalkeeper for EHS) had an amazing save today to keep that shutout. As a freshman, you know you're always going to be a little bit nervous (going into a first match), but as the games have gone on, she has (boosted her confidence thanks to the defensive backline's efforts) shown her confidence; she's done well.”

Abby Crabtree's goal came at the 38-minute mark of the match; her and a Normal defender went up for a ball in the air and the ball bounced off the Normal defender's head first before going to Crabtree; she took possession and scored to put the Tigers on top.

One thing that can be dangerous for Tiger opponents is Abby Crabtree's speed; she's used it to great advantage in many of her nine goals on the season, and her goal against Normal was no exception. It came when Mushill fired a pass up in the air that allowed Crabtree to use that speed to get into position to take it.

“We were discussing that” going into the match, Comerford said. “They play a little bit of an offside trap (where defenders will move up on attackers to try to create an offside situation, where an attacker is ahead of the defenders when the ball is played to her). It's a case where a ball might not always be there.

“Every now and then, you might have to play back to be able to run on and beat them in a foot chase. That's what she did; she had a move there and took it away.”

The Tigers had several good chances to extend the lead in the second half, but failed to click on them. As things turned out, just one goal on the day was enough.

The Tigers went to 8-2-1 on the year with the win, their fifth in a row; they host Triad at 5:45 p.m. Monday.

