



Edwardsville beats Collinsville 7-6 in Belleville West Regional

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
May 26 2016 6:35 AM





BELLEVILLE – If there's one thing you never want to do when it comes to area high school baseball...

Never count Edwardsville out. Just when you think you've got them on the ropes, they'll find a way to come back.

Take **Jake Garella**, for instance. Not only did Garella shut down Collinsville after stepping in for starter Trey Riley in the top of the first after the Kahoks scored five times, Garella went 4-for-5 on the day, driving in two key runs in a four-run sixth that pulled the Tigers back to 5-4, then drove in the winning run in the bottom of the seventh to put Edwardsville into Saturday morning's IHSA Class 4A Belleville West Regional final as the Tigers rallied from 6-0 down to take a 7-6 win over the Kahoks.

The Tigers went to 29-7 with the win and will meet the winner of today's Belleville East-Belleville West semifinal contest at 11 a.m. Saturday for a trip to the Bloomington Sectional at Illinois Wesleyan University at stake; the Kahoks were eliminated at 17-16.

“We had runners on base throughout the game,” said **Tiger coach Tim Funkhouser**, “and we just didn't have that bigger hit; we needed that knockout punch. We were seeking that; that's all you can do, just keep trying to battle in your at-bats.

“Their starter (Parker Marchbanks) was kind of living on the edge at times, but then he made some good pitches and when we did hit the ball hard, we hit it at somebody. Credit our guys; despite the start we had, giving away some freebies early, we just kept battling (in their) at-bats and didn't have too many giveaways on that end and showed a lot of resiliency. I'm proud of the way our guys continued to compete.”

“I can't be more proud of my guys today and the four years with this senior group,” said Kahok coach Pete Trapp . “I'm going to miss them tomorrow and the next day and next spring and the following spring. They mean a lot to me; we went through a lot together.”

Collinsville got out to a big lead early as Riley encountered some control problems; it started innocently enough when Marchbanks, on the game's first pitch, laid down a bunt down the third base line that stopped in fair territory near the plate; Riley picked the ball up but didn't have a play and Marchbanks ended up on first. Marchbanks then scored on a series of wild pitches before Jordan Reichert singled in Hayden Juenger to make it 2-0. Riley struck out the next two Kahok batters and seemed to settle in, but Reichert, Josh Kovach and Clayton Hartman all scored on bases-loaded walks and a single before Garella stepped in to end the inning.

Collinsville got one more run in the second to make it 6-0 and the Tigers seemingly were on the ropes; Edwardsville, in the third, tried to mount a comeback when Collin Clayton and Cole Cimarolli drew two-out walks and Garella reached on an error to score Clayton, but Joel Quirin hit a shot to center field that was snared by Reichert to end the threat. In the fourth, Tyler Stamer got a leadoff double and Will Messer walked to put runners at first and second, but Marchbanks retired the next three hitters to keep Edwardsville at bay.

The Tigers loaded the bases in the fifth when Cimarolli got a one-out single and went to third when Garella doubled. Quirin managed to draw a walk to load the bases, but Marchbanks struck out Stamer and Messer to keep things at 6-1 going into the sixth. Garella kept the Kahoks off the board by getting some big outs when it seemed they were about to mount a rally, especially in the fourth and sixth innings.

Then came the bottom of the sixth, when the Tigers mounted a key rally. It started when Cole Hansel walked and Kade Burns, pinch-hitting for Joe Wallace, doubled to score pinch-runner Max Kieffer to cut the lead to 6-2. Marchbanks retired the next two hitters, but Cole Cimarolli reached on an error to put two runners on, and Burns and Cimarolli both scored on a Garella double to cut the lead to 6-4. Quirin then drew a walk to put runners at first and second and Stamer came through with a single to drive in Garella to cut the lead to 6-5 and chase Marchbanks.

Garella struck out the side in the top of the seventh and Reichert stepped on to the mound for the bottom of the seventh; Hansel opened the inning by reaching on an error and was sacrificed to second by Wallace. Andrew Yancik then reached on another error to score Hansel, tying the game at 6-6. One out after that, Cimarolli walked and both he and Yancik stole second and third, respectively.

That brought Garella up to the plate, and on a full count, delivered a single to bring in Yancik and win the game for the Tigers.

“I was trying to square the ball up,” Garella said of his game-winner. “I knew runners were in scoring position and I knew if I put the ball in play hard, he (Reichert) was going to give me a good pitch to hit, and if I put the ball in play hard, they (the runners) were going to score. That was the main goal; just try to square the ball up every time, and if they catch it, they catch it, but we scored.”

“We did a good job of battling and keeping our head,” Funkhouser said. “There was a lot of resiliency; our guys just kept playing the game.”

