



Tigers take first 7-on-7 football reps on Monday night

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
July 12 2016 1:40 PM





EDWARDSVILLE – Football season will be here before you know it, and the sounds of football were coming from Tiger Stadium in Edwardsville Monday night as the **EHS football team** conducted the first of three Monday night 7-on-7 passing sessions scheduled before the start of preseason training.

The **Tigers** took on **Hazelwood Central, Belleville Althoff and Gateway STEM of St. Louis** in three controlled scrimmage sessions that give both the offensive and defensive sides of the ball the opportunity to work on passing-game situations, similar to what might be seen once the season gets under way. Highland also took part in Monday's sessions.

“We did a lot of things better; we're not where we need to be,” said **Tiger coach Matt Martin** after the session. “Our kids will be the first to tell you that – too many mental errors (Monday). It's one thing to have a talented team drive the field on you; when you don't get lined up right and give up easy touchdowns, that's bad news.

“We've got to limit our turnovers – too many (interceptions). But there's a lot of positives, just a reminder that there's value in the summer and we need the time. We need to limit our mental errors, limit our turnovers, make good decisions with the ball, do a better job communicating on defense. Some people think you're in man (coverage) and some people think you're in zone and guess what – that can cost you six points.”

Brenden Dickmann, who stepped into the quarterback role after Riley Jones was injured last season, took the reps in the session and Martin was pleased with his performance. “He's growing, he's reading the coverages better,” Martin said.

The sessions give players a chance to learn how to play their positions and work on aspects of their games, quarterback being one of them. “Sometimes, people don't understand the passing game,” Martin said. “I don't know if there's a tougher position in all of sports than quarterback; sometimes, things go wrong and it's not always the quarterback's fault.”

The Tigers did have several standouts in Monday's session. “There's a lot of kids that made plays,” Martin said. “Receiver-wise, **(Nathan) Kolesa** made some catches, **A.J. (Epenesa)** made some catches, **(Daval) Torres**, **Donovan Booker** made a nice catch, **Dionte Rodgers** (a sophomore) made some nice catches.

“Defensively, we had a couple of picks and that was good.”

One of the things about 7-on-7s is that Edwardsville will get to see teams they won't get to see once the season starts. “Althoff's good; coach (Ken) Turner does a good job. They've got a talented team, they're going to be a force to be reckoned with this year (in area football). Jason Dulick (the Gateway STEM coach) does a good job; they're a good 7-on-7 team.”

The Tigers will have two more 7-on-7 sessions at Tiger Stadium July 18 and July 25 before preseason practice begins Aug. 8; the Tigers open the season Aug. 25 at Quincy, with the home opener Sept. 2 against Rock Island.

