

Edwardsville field hockey team has potential for 2016 season

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – **Edwardsville's field hockey team** bounced back from a slow start in 2015 to finish the season at 13-10, falling to Kirkwood in the season-ending Midwest Tournament last October.

The Tigers will launch their 2016 campaign with a 4:15 p.m. Tuesday match against Pattonville at Tiger Stadium, the first of three home matches to start the season.

“We've been looking good” in preseason practice, said **Tiger coach Julia Tyler**.

“There's a lot of potential with the team this year; our technical skills are good and we're looking to improve on our tactical skills. We just want to keep getting better every day.”

The Tigers split a pair of preseason matches in a jamboree held recently at St. Joseph's Academy in St. Louis County, dropping a 2-0 decision to Cor Jesu and defeating Ladue 4-1.

The recently concluded Games of the XXXI Olympiad in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, helped give field hockey some exposure thanks to matches that were televised on NBCSN. The American women's team won four of five group-play matches, including upsets of Australia and Argentina, before being eliminated by Germany in the knockout stage of the tournament. “The girls were watching the matches and were really excited about the exposure of the game,” Tyler said.

“I actually watched all the games; I was heartbroken when (Team USA) lost, but they did so well,” said **Tiger senior Annie Mulford**. “I had some people asking me if had been watching the USA games; it was awesome. The announcers were saying the word about field hockey has been spreading; that was really exciting.”

“Things have been looking really well,” Mulford said. “Our preseason has gone really well and we've been working hard in practice. I think our outlook for the season is really positive for everyone.

“We lost some really valuable seniors and I think people who are stepping into those spots are doing a really nice job; I think we'll have a really good team this year. Our defense is strong and so is our offense; it'll be exciting to see how we'll keep developing.”

“A lot of us didn't know what to expect going into this year,” said **senior forward Veronica Carrow**. “We did lose a lot of strong players, but we've all been connecting really well and things have been going pretty good.

“I think we'll do pretty well this year; we've been definitely growing as a program the past few years. I think we connect well on and off the field and that will help us.”

After Tuesday's opener, the Tigers host **Marquette Catholic** Thursday evening and Visitation Academy of St. Louis County Aug. 31 before taking part in the Gateway Classic Tournament Labor Day weekend.

