

Nava has career match with five goals, Tigers field hockey team romps past Pattonville 9-0

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – Prior to Tuesday's season-opening match, **Natalie Nava** had never scored more than three goals in a field hockey match.

Nava scored three times in the first nine minutes of the match to get **Edwardsville** off to a 3-0 lead and scored twice more to help give the Tigers a 9-0 win over **Pattonville** at Tiger Stadium.

“We worked really well together and I'm glad I could be at the right spot at the right time,” Nava said after the match. “It kind of sets the tone for our whole season (winning their opening match by such a large margin).”

“I think we just did give-and-goes down the field and kind of like in and out of the circle (near the goal); we just took the baseline and I was just there.” Nava said of her first couple of goals.”

“Natalie saw the opportunities where she was very aggressive in the goal area,” said **Tiger coach Julia Tyler**. “She was ready to finish; she did an awesome job.

“(Nava's start) really helped with the intensity for the game and picking us up and really continuing it throughout the game. We've talked about that too – coming out strong, not giving up and being consistent throughout (a match).”

Nava's contribution stood out, but Tyler thought her entire team played well throughout the day. “The whole team did a very good job today,” Tyler said. “We've been working on getting our defensive players up in the attack and our midfielders (moving into the attack), and all the girls were really playing well off the ball today where they were able to contribute to our offensive attack.

“They did a good job of working together as a unit and finishing.”

Nava got the Tigers off to a 3-0 lead thanks to her three-goal outburst in the opening nine minutes of the match, with Annie Mulford, Olivia Fink and Ansley Dorsey all assisting on the goals. The Tigers didn't lack for chances the rest of the first half, getting 12 short-corner opportunities (similar to a corner kick in soccer) that the Pirate defense managed to turn away.

“Our corner game could have been a lot better,” Mulford said. “I think we just need to go back on working on that in practice; we have so many people we can use in the circle and for scoring opportunities, which is really exciting. We just need to keep working on it.

“Some of it may have been first-game jitters too. Next game, I think we'll be better.”

Nava got the second half off to a big start when she scored her fourth goal 1:45 into the second half and Mulford added to the lead when she scored on a backhanded shot 3:25 into the half to put the Tigers up 5-0. Nava got her fifth goal at 6:39 of the half and Veronica Carrow scored at 8:26 to extend the lead to 7-0.

Sophia Swalley scored with 11:43 left in the half and freshman Kailey Noud got her first varsity goal with 3:43 left to finish off the scoring for Edwardsville. Sarah Blume recorded the shutout for Edwardsville as they went to 1-0 on the year.

The Tiger junior varsity also scored a shutout, blanking the Pirates 3-0 on goals from Mattie Norton (who scored twice) and Noud. Amanda Burdick and Anna Farrar shared the shutout.

The Tigers host Marquette Catholic in a varsity-only contest at 5:30 p.m. Thursday at Tiger Stadium, then wrap up their three-game season-opening homestand with a clash against Visitation at 4:15 p.m. Aug. 31.

