

# Verdun, Martin spark Edwardsville's volleyball girls to early success

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer  
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**GRANITE CITY – Edwardsville's girls volleyball team** is enjoying another successful season; the Tigers stand at 11-3 overall on the season, 2-0 in the Southwestern Conference going into a Tuesday evening home match against Belleville Althoff and a Thursday evening league home match against East St. Louis.

Two key reasons behind the Tigers' success thus far are a pair of juniors, **Rachel Verdun and Kate Martin**.

“We did really good,” Verdun said following Thursday's 25-8, 25-12 win at Granite City. “We put everything together really good; our passes were good, our hits were good. It was a great night for us.

“We executed really well and played really well as a team,” Martin said.

Martin has been playing the sport since sixth grade and is also a standout for the girls basketball team in the winter. When asked what her best sport was, she said “It's hard to say; I love both of those sports. It depends on what season I'm in on which sport is my favorite, but I plan to play basketball in college.”

“I've grown up playing volleyball,” Verdun said. “My parents all played volleyball, so when I was little, I'd be trying to set up the ball all the time.”

Verdun had been playing for the SWI Crush club team before the team folded, but Verdun is searching for a new club to play for in the off-season.

Martin has registered 92 kills on the season, an average of 2.88 a game; she has recorded 29 blocks and 122 digs, averaging 2.22 a game and has had 22 service aces, scoring 70 points. Verdun has aced 17 times and scored 93 points on the year, with 41 kills (1.28 kills per game) and 127 digs (3.16 per game).

Verdun and Martin are optimistic that the Tigers can go far in November's IHSA Class 4A volleyball postseason tournament. "I think we can go very far in the postseason; I'm really excited to play, excited to see what we can do this postseason," Verdun said. "Kate is doing a really good job hitting; she's hitting everything and it's going straight job. She's doing a great job."

"I think we can go really far (in the postseason) if we stick to the plan, stay focused (and suffer) no more injuries (the Tigers have lost a couple of key players to injury recently)," Martin said. "Once everyone heals, I think we'll be good; we can go a long way."

"I love how well all of us get along; we're all like best friends and I just really like that."