

Flyers stay unbeaten, defeat Tigers 20-10

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – It was a fortuitous bounce that proved to be the difference in Friday night's Southwestern Conference blockbuster game between **East St. Louis** and **Edwardsville**.

The bounce came in the final quarter when Tiger quarterback Brenden Dickmann, who had ran for the yardage the Tigers got in that drive, tried to pass and it was tipped at the line. The Flyers' James Knight gained possession and took off for the end zone, the Tigers giving chase. Knight appeared to be ready to cross the goal line to put extend their lead when the ball came loose.

Markevion Darough, trailing the play, was right there and pounced on the loose ball to score what proved to be the backbreaking touchdown in the Flyers' 20-10 win over the Tigers at Tiger Stadium before a large crowd.

Both teams went into the contest undefeated; the Flyers stand at 6-0 overall, 4-0 in the SWC, while the Tigers fell to 5-1 overall, 3-1 in the league.

“We just stayed consistent,” said **Flyer coach Darren Sunkett**. “We didn't want to stray away from the running game; we didn't pop the long one, like we would like, but kept

chugging away at it; we'd get three-four yards a pop when we needed it and we mixed up the pass game and picked up some crucial first downs, just keep their offense off the field and keep ours on.

“I thought we did some good things offensively mixing up the pass-run combination, but our 'D' played lights-out; that's what we expect from these guys.”

“We made mistakes and we'll watch the film and we'll get into practice so we can get better; we just ended up on the losing side,” **Tiger coach Matt Martin** said. “They're good; (Knight) is a heck of a player. They've got more than that, but he seemed to make the plays all over the field, but they play a high-pressure defense. If you can keep pounding and pounding and pounding, they're one guy away.

“If you can make somebody miss, you can have big plays, so what you saw was big play, big play, stuff, stuff, stuff, big play, big play; we just couldn't make enough of them tonight.”

One big play came in the opening term when, on a third-and-11 from their own 27, Dickmann hit Dayleon Harris on a short pass and Harris did the rest, charging down the field for a 71-yard reception that was stopped at the 2; Dionte Rodgers scored on the next play from scrimmage to put the Tigers ahead 7-0 after Riley Patterson's convert.

The Tigers extended the lead to 10-0 when Patterson connected on a 20-yard field goal after a EHS drive stalled out late in the opening term. The Flyers, though, had quarterback Reyondous Estes, who helped keep drives alive for the Flyers with his ability to make plays.

“That was my biggest worry,” Martin said. “No disrespect to his throwing and their passing game, but he just extends plays; he gets first downs, he just creates with his legs. He's just a tremendous athlete.”



That ability to keep plays going served the Flyers well; Estes cut the Tiger lead to 10-6 in the second term when he scored from 2 yards out and it stayed that way when a two-point conversion run failed, then kept a drive alive with a big scramble that got the ball in close in the dying seconds of the first half. Estes then called Jarrell Anderson's number and he scored from yards out with 22.2 seconds left in the half to give the Flyers the lead, with the lead going to 14-0 when Estes hit Jeff Thomas with a two-point conversion pass.

The Flyers kept pounding away at the Tiger defense but couldn't score until the deciding interception and fumble that put East Side up 20-10. Edwardsville couldn't get anything going to get the score closer, with the Flyer defense coming up with the answers when they needed to.

The Flyer win marked the first time East St. Louis had defeated Edwardsville in their last three games head-to-head; last year's game was canceled because of a teacher's strike in East St. Louis that cost the Flyers the rest of their season. "We knew we had it in us," Sunkett said. "He's (Martin) got a great ball club and I'm sure they'll have much success later this season."

"They're tough; they're a good football team and they're going to cause a lot of people problems. We just weren't good enough tonight," Martin said of the Flyers.

Edwardsville hosts Belleville West next Friday for their Homecoming game, then travel to Alton Oct. 14 and close out the regular season with Granite City at home Oct. 21.





[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)