

Tigers move ahead in boys soccer regional, blanking Warriors 5-0

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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GRANITE CITY – At the start of the **Southwestern Conference boys soccer season**, **Edwardsville** traveled to **Granite City's Gene Baker Field** and had to settle for a 1-1 draw after the Tigers had problems putting the ball in the back of the net.

Edwardsville returned to Gene Baker Tuesday night to take on the Warriors for an IHSA Class 3A Granite City Regional semifinal match.

Things were a lot different this time around as the Tigers got goals from five different players en route to a 5-0 win over Granite to move into Friday evening's regional final against Collinsville (see related story); the winner of that match moves into next week's Peoria Notre Dame Sectional against the O'Fallon Regional winner.

The win put Edwardsville's record at 14-1-5 for the season, while the Warriors were eliminated at 5-10-6.

The Warriors had a chance to break on top early when Zach Medlin sent in Lucas Rainwater on a breakaway, only to be turned back by Tiger goalkeeper Daniel Piccihotti in what could have been a key moment early on.

“We’ve got the most territory, we’ve got the most possessions,” **Tiger coach Mark Heiderscheid** said. “You have a breakdown that happens at the one moment; Piccihotti

stops it and then it's back to us putting things in their front third. You hate to say, but if there's a breakdown like that, if all of a sudden the ball goes in, it becomes a tough situation.

“If you have a team that's perhaps a 1 seed and they're playing a 15 seed, the 15 seed gets a goal and all of a sudden, you can go ahead and pack (the defense in). Then it makes it difficult; then, you're playing that uphill grind where, is it going to be a 1-1 at the half, is 2-1 all you're going to make of it?”

“If the team that's pressing and is connecting, all of a sudden they get that first goal and second goal, it gets them out of their game plan. But they can't be just pack it and don't play the game. I think they really had no choice but to make sure they had a high work rate.”

“They have a good side,” said **Warrior coach Kenny Jackson**. “Mark is a good coach; they have a good program and they always come to regionals ready to play and they took it to us. The difference (between the August draw and Tuesday's match) was that they didn't score in the first game and they scored in this game.”

“They had the ball probably about 80 percent of the time in the first game and they outshot us; today, they put the ball in the net. We really had one scoring chance all day and we didn't score.”

Edwardsville broke on top early when Alec Mills connected on a penalty kick in the 11th minute; eight minutes later, Mohammad Hamad scored to put the Tigers in command 2-0, then extended the lead in the 32nd minute when John Wasmuth scored for a 3-0 lead.

Things stayed that way most of the second half until Josh Reed scored in the 75th minute off a deflection in a goal-mouth scramble to put the match on ice, with Michael Piccihotti scoring in the 79th minute to give the Tigers their final margin of victory.

