

# Belleville East runs into Edwardsville "buzzsaw"

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer  
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**EDWARDSVILLE** – Belleville East boys basketball coach Abel Schrader wasn't mincing his words Tuesday night.

“We ran into a buzzsaw. If that's not one of the best teams in the state of Illinois, I don't know what is,” Schrader said after **Edwardsville**, coming off a loss Saturday evening to Belleville West at the SWC @ The E event at SIU-Edwardsville, got off to a very quick start and went on to defeat the Lancers 84-45 at Lucco-Jackson Gym.

“I don't know what they shot,” Schrader said, “and after we got down 11-0, we took bad shots, it led to easy baskets for them and we just kind of laid down and let them kick our butts tonight. It was never a game.

“We still think we're still a good team, and certainly not 35-plus points as bad as they are, but they shot it really well; we did not. We took some bad shots and defensively, we just kind of laid down a little bit.”

“I thought we did a lot of things good on offense tonight,” said **Tiger coach Mike Waldo**. “I thought **A.J. (Epenesa)** had an excellent game in the low post, either making a play himself or finding somebody open or drawing enough attention that somebody else was open, so I thought A.J. had an excellent game that way.

“The things we've been practicing offensively, we were able to do tonight well.”



Edwardsville was so dominate on the night, all five of their starters finished in double figures scoring, led by **Jack Marinko** with 20 points on 6-of-8 shooting from behind the three-point arc; **Mark Smith** was right behind with 19 points, **Epenesa** 12, **Oliver Stephen** 11 and **Caleb Strohmeier** 10. **Javon Pickett** was the only Lancer in double figures on the night, leading East with 16 points.

The Tigers' defense played as much of a role in the win as their offense, Waldo felt. “I thought we did a lot of good things defensively,” Waldo said. “I thought Caleb had a really good game defensively; I thought he did a really good job of making it hard on them to run their offense. He tries hard and does a really good job defensively.

“I think that taking what the defense gives you and making your baskets are a pretty important thing in basketball and we were able to do that tonight. I thought our guys did a good job of making the right pass and finding the guy open. Jack's a good shooter and he works at it; he's going to make shots.”

The Tiger JV team lost the curtain-raiser on the night to the Lancers 53-37.

The Tigers went to 5-1 on the year, 1-1 in the SWC; East fell to 4-2 overall, 0-2 in the league. Next up for Edwardsville is a trip to Virgil Fletcher Gym in Collinsville Friday night, with tip set for 7:30 p.m.