

# Edwardsville MSCHA team makes some history with Illinois match, Tigers tie DeSmet 1-1

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer  
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**EAST ALTON** – Edwardsville's Mid-States Club Hockey Association team made some history Thursday night.

The Tigers played the first MSCHA game played on the Illinois side of the Mississippi River in nearly five years; the last one came in January 2012 when Granite City's hockey team played in the league.

The game was a close one, with goaltenders Matt Griffin of the Tigers and William Oliver of DeSmet coming up big time and again throughout the game.

And as things turned out, the two teams battled to a 1-1 tie at East Alton Ice Arena in a Municipal Conference game; the draw left the Tigers at 6-2-1 (13 points) in the conference and 10-2-1 (21 points overall) while the Spartans went to 4-3-1 (nine points) in the conference and 7-3-1 (15 points) overall.

“That was a good hockey game,” said **Tiger coach Jason Walker**. “Both teams were moving up and down the ice quick and the goalies were outstanding. Usually in game like that, with the amount of shots and good pucks put on net, one squeaks in, but the goalies weren't having it today; they played really well.”

Having the home crowd supporting the Tigers pleased Walker. “It's nice to be at home, and whenever we're home, we get great student support,” Walker said. “That was nice and we would have liked to bang one more home for everybody, but it was just one of those games.

“It felt good to be just back here, in a rink we're used to and playing against a good opponent. It was a good hockey team and sometimes, you've just got to tip your cap to the other team as far as how they played.”

“It was a battle,” said **Spartan coach Casey Ott**. “Edwardsville's a good team; they come hard for three periods and stay consistent for three periods.”

“Emotions run high with the younger guys,” Ott said of Edwardsville being at home. “That certainly gives them an advantage, but I think we came out hard in the first period and kind of set a tone. We didn't let that crowd get into it so much and it played out from there.

“That game could have gone either way in the third; I think it's a testament to both teams that they both grinded it out and didn't want to give anybody anything.”

Both Griffin and Oliver came up with big saves early on to keep the game scoreless until, with 8:04 left in the first, Carson Lewis found the range and got a shot past Oliver

to put the Tigers ahead, with Tyler Schaeffer and Lucas Tucker getting the assists. Things remained the same the rest of the period and into the second when DeSmet tied things up on an unassisted goal by Derek Northrup with 7:50 left in the period.

Both teams had several opportunities to break the tie, but Griffin and Oliver were both equal to the task.

The Tigers had 28 shots on goal, with Oliver coming up with 27 saves; DeSmet fired 32 shots at Griffin, who had 31 saves on the night. Both teams went 0-for-2 on the power play on the night.

Next up for the Tigers is a 7 p.m. New Year's night game at East Alton against Chaminade, followed by a 7:15 p.m. Jan. 5 game at EAIA against Oakville; EHS will have two more games on the Illinois side, both at Granite City's Wilson Park Ice Rink, Jan. 19 against Fort Zumwalt West and Jan. 26 against CBC.



## **MVCHA HOCKEY**

**EDWARDSVILLE 3, BELLEVILLE 2:** Edwardsville's Mississippi Valley Club Hockey Association team got a much-needed win over Belleville in a curtain-raising game at EAIA Thursday night, the Tigers topping Belleville 3-2 thanks to a third-period Collin Salter goal.

The win put the Tigers into a second-place tie with Bethalto, EHS going to 10-2-2 (22 points) on the year; the Eagles sit 10-3-2 (22 points), both teams trailing O'Fallon (12-3-0, 24 points) with the Tuesday division into Classes 2A and 1A approaching; Columbia and Freeburg/Waterloo loom right behind, both at 10-4-1 with 21 points going into next week's first-half finales.

Kellin Roettgers got the first goal for Edwardsville from assists from Trevor Laub and George Brandstedt and a tying second-period goal from Sam Gibbons, assisted by Andrew LaRose and Connor Hinterser; Salter's game-winner came from a Jordan Crow assist 2:31 into the third period. Belleville's goals both came in the second period from Terrance Purbihat.

The Tigers close out the opening portion of the schedule with games at 8:45 p.m. Monday and Tuesday at EAIA, Monday against Bethalto and Tuesday against Highland.