

Edwardsville hockey team has another chance to compete for USA Hockey High School National Championship

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – Edwardsville's hockey team has accomplished many things the past several years.

Including a trip to the **Toyota USA Hockey High School National Championship tournament.**

The Tigers will get another chance to bring home a national championship; they've been invited to take part in this year's USA Hockey national championship tournament in Cleveland March 30-April 3. Last year's Tigers took part in the tournament in the Washington area and reached the quarterfinals before being eliminated.

“We're really excited about the chance to return to the national tournament,” said **Tiger coach Jason Walker**. “We did well last year and it means a lot to the program and to everyone that we've been invited back.

“It's a chance to show everyone what kind of hotbed of hockey the entire area is. There's a lot of good teams and players here in the region and it's a chance to see how we compare to teams from other areas of the country.”

The tournament host is Cleveland Suburban Hockey; games will be played in suburban rinks in Mentor, Ohio, and Gates Mills, Ohio. Hockey in the Cleveland area has a rich history, focusing mostly on the Cleveland Barons minor-league team which played in the American Hockey League from 1937-73; when the World Hockey Association was formed in 1972, a team representing Cleveland was one of the teams in the rival to the National Hockey League known as the Crusaders.

The NHL played in Cleveland from 1976-78 when the California Golden Seals franchise moved from Oakland, Calif., to Cleveland to become a new incarnation of the Barons; that team merged with the then-Minnesota North Stars (today's Dallas Stars) in the summer of 1978 to become a new Minnesota North Stars franchise.

Cleveland hosted an International Hockey League team from 1992-2001 known as the Lumberjacks before the IHL folded. A new version of the Barons played from 2001-06 before moving to Worcester, Mass., in 2006, with a new team known then as the Lake Erie Monsters arriving in 2007 in the AHL: the team was renamed Cleveland Monsters during the 2016-17 off-season after having won the AHL's Calder Cup championship.

The Tigers have the support of the EHS athletic department and the Edwardsville community, something Walker is very happy about. “Our community has been really supportive of us,” Walker said. “We're really happy to represent our school and our community; the athletic department strongly supports all the sports at the school.”