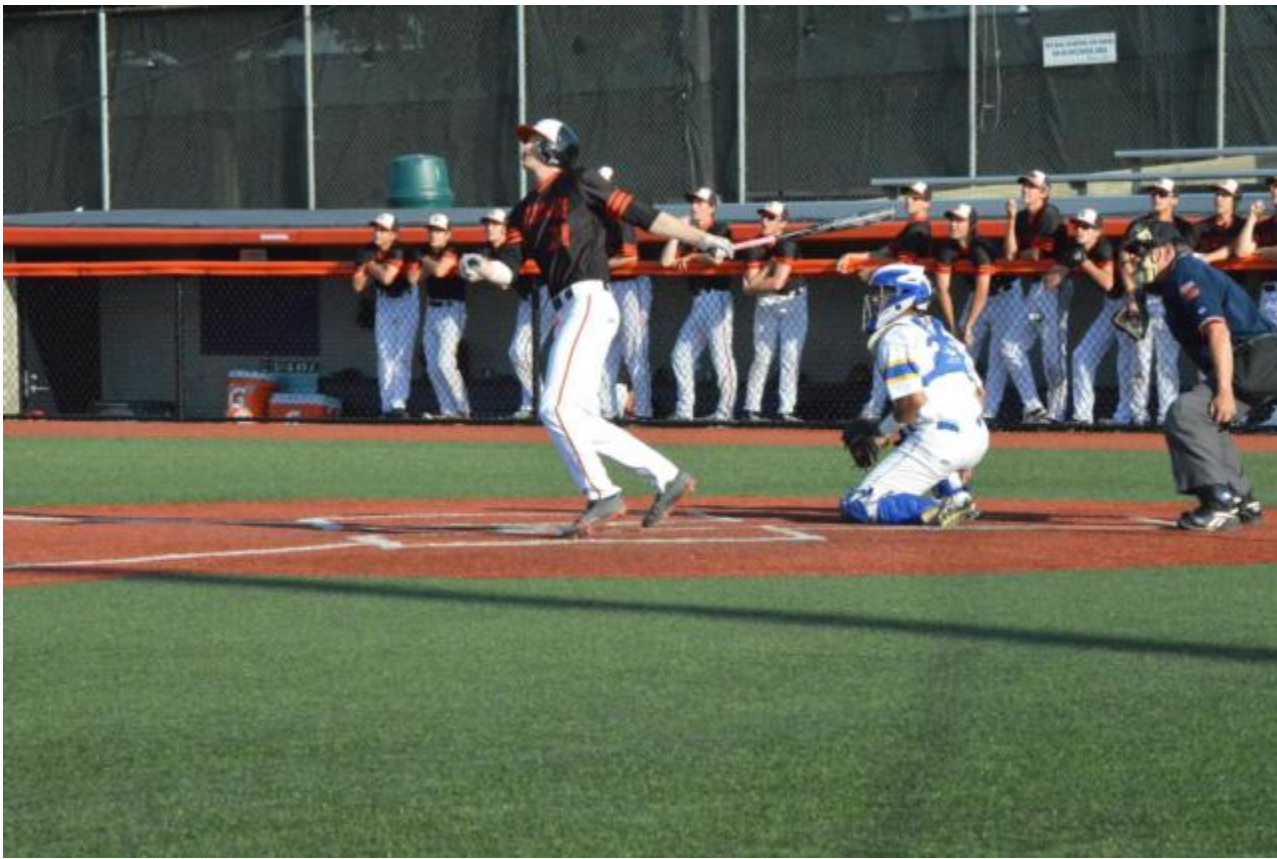


Edwardsville baseball team heads to Joliet chasing state title

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EDWARDSVILLE - Edwardsville's baseball team is heading north to Joliet this weekend in search of something that's eluded them since 1998: A state championship.

The Tigers are making their first appearance in the IHSA Class 4A baseball finals at Joliet's Silver Creek Field this weekend, their first appearance in the state tournament since 2007, the final year before expansion to four classes; EHS was eliminated in the quarterfinals that year by Naperville Neuqua Valley 7-3, who went on to defeat Winnetka New Trier for the Class AA championship. They will take on Burbank St.

Laurence of the Chicago Catholic League at 5 p.m. today in a semifinal contest; the other semifinal between New Trier and Crystal Lake South will precede Edwardsville's game at 3 p.m..

The final is set for 5 p.m. Saturday, with the third-place playoff game set for 3 p.m. Saturday.

The Tigers got to Joliet by defeating Orland Park Sandburg – who had defeated them in the 2002 Class AA final – 11-3 in Monday's Champaign Super-Sectional at Illinois Field on the University of Illinois campus, thanks to an eight-run fifth-inning explosion that saw 13 Tigers come to bat in the inning. St. Laurence got to the semifinal by defeating Neuqua Valley 5-1 in the Standard Bank Stadium 2 Super-Sectional in Crestwood Monday evening.

Edwardsville's last state championship came in 1998 when the Tigers completed an undefeated 40-0 season by defeating Tinley Park Andrew 10-2 in the Class AA final.

The Tigers enter the game with a 33-7 record; they defeated Alton and Belleville West in their own regional and O'Fallon and Normal West in the Bloomington Sectional at Illinois Wesleyan before eliminating Sandburg in Monday's super-sectional. The Vikings go into today's game at 35-5, having defeated Chicago Curie and Riverside-Brookfield in the Oak Lawn regional and Burbank Reavis and traditional rival Chicago Brother Rice in their own sectional before eliminating Neuqua Valley in the super-sectional; this will be the Vikings' first state appearance since finishing third in the 1993 Class AA tournament.