

Tigers prepare for football opener with spirited preseason scrimmage

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE — The Edwardsville Tigers football team had a very successful season in 2016, and look to be ready for more success in the 2017.

The Tigers' varsity team hosted a scrimmage before a big crowd at Tiger Stadium, where the team practiced under simulated game conditions. And both the first team offensive and defensive units played very well.

The scrimmage was the climax to an afternoon and evening-long football carnival, which also featured scrimmages from the Little Tigers junior football program, the teams from both Lincoln and Liberty Middle Schools and the Edwardsville's freshman and sophomore teams.

"One of the good things is we didn't have any injuries," Edwardsville head football coach Matt Martin said. "Much more importantly, each of the players got playing time under game conditions, which is always a positive.

"It's a great experience for them on Friday night to get under lights and have their family and friends see them. It was fun."

The first team offense, led by new quarterback Kendall Abdur-Rahmann, moved the ball very well. And the defense also was very good, getting strong overall play, giving up ground grudgingly and getting stops at key times. Martin was very pleased with the efforts.

"A lot of positives," Martin said. "Before I get too specific in the positives, I need to watch film, but I thought guys were being physical, I thought they were giving great effort, getting to the ball, our execution was pretty good, there were minimal penalties, so a lot of positives tonight.

"This is their first experience with officials in a long time," Martin added, "so those officials help remind us of the little things."

There were some good highlights of the scrimmages also. The opening kickoff was taken back 100 yards for a touchdown, while Abdur-Rahman moved the ball well, getting good runs from his backfield along with mixing his passing game effectively. The defense also came in for a highlight with a fumble return for another touchdown, while getting stops on key plays.

The Tigers now prepare for their season opener next Saturday afternoon against Chicagoland power Naperville North in a 3 p.m. kickoff. Martin is looking forward to the opener, as well as the campaign ahead.

"I just want us to play hard and play smart," Martin said. "If we do that, I think that puts us in a position to win the ball game."

And Martin is very pleased with his team's performance and outlook.

"I thought the kids did a good job," Martin said. "Good attitude, good effort out there. We walked away pretty healthy, so that's what we're looking for."











[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)