



Edwardsville's Hoelting enjoys being last line of defense

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – Arguably, there may be no more pressure-packed position on the soccer field than the one of goalkeeper.

It's the last line of defense; it's the last player between the ball and the net; there's always a risk of being on the receiving end of a hard shot or an errant kick.

For Edwardsville's Michael Hoelting, he wouldn't want it any other way.

The senior goalkeeper for the Tigers has played a key role in EHS' start to the boys soccer season, recording multiple shutouts – or, in soccer parlance, “clean sheets” - for the season. The shutouts included another in Tuesday night's 3-0 win at Collinsville. Without Hoelting's effort in goal, the triumph might have been extremely difficult for the Tigers on Tuesday.

The clean sheets Hoelting has had so far is a testament to the EHS defense and his efforts, though. “I can always say that my defense is working for me,” Hoelting said. “Sometimes we make mistakes – again, that's soccer. We always go for the clean sheets and that's what we're going to try to do all season.”

Hoelting has been playing soccer “since I can remember – it's been forever” he said with a smile. “I've always wanted to play goal; it's always been one of those things because no one else wants to play. It can be kind of dangerous and it's not always the most fun position because you get called out the most.

“But I've accepted the challenge (of being in the net); I always do. I love playing soccer and I will play until I can't play anymore. I will play goalie until I can't play that either.”

Hoelting models his game on U.S. Men's National Team and Colorado Rapids (MLS) goalkeeper Tim Howard and Bayern Munich (German Bundesliga) and German National Team keeper Manuel Neuer. “Manuel Neuer for the feet, Tim Howard for the saves,” Hoelting said.

As far as goals for the season, Hoelting put it simply: “We're going to keep working and we're going to try to get all the way to state; we're going to do everything in our power

to get there, and I know everybody will work because we're going to all push each other because we all want to be there.”