

Chances there for both teams, but Tigers, Explorers play to scoreless draw

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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ALTON – Thursday night's non-conference soccer match between Edwardsville and Marquette Catholic didn't lack action or good chances for both teams.

But the match didn't yield any goals.

The Tigers and Explorers battled to a scoreless draw – for Edwardsville, their second straight 0-0 game – at Gordon Moore Park; the Tigers went to 11-1-3 on the season while the Explorers went to 8-6-3 on the year, with both goaltenders Alex Kehrer of Edwardsville and Nick Hemann of Marquette recording clean sheets.

“I think Marquette did a great job of staying organized in the back,” said EHS coach Mark Heiderscheid, “especially (Aaron Boulch) up front did a great job and (Trenton Dietiker) at center upfield did a good job, and I think whenever they got the ball forward, they had so much energy; it was really well-played on their part.

“It's helpful for us; at this stage, if I was younger and more short-sighted, I'd worry about results more – now it's more about how you're playing. Granted, it'd be nicer if you could finish, but it's a tough deal when they had the two guys dropped back, there's six guys in a line there and two guys in front, so it's kind of hard to crack, but that's OK.”

Edwardsville did dominate the time of possession in the match – they had a good number of shots on goal and corner kicks in the match – but couldn't finish with goals. “We had a huge amount of possession, we're knocking the ball around,” Heiderscheid said. “I think that's telling; we had a couple of shots again where it's like – you know what, eventually, you've got to be able to make those – in the last couple of games, we don't, but it's hitting (crossbars) in the last game or this one, but I still think given everything, our possession was really good at times.

“We did give the ball away in the center in the center part uncharacteristically a few times, but as long as we can just keep with the adage with – especially here, when we went to a whole different system, so that's a thing for players to adjust – but I thought they did a good job; we're creating chances.”

“It feels real good,” Explorer coach Joe Burchett said of the draw. “I'm very pleased; I'm not sure we were the better team; there were opportunities to score and we didn't. We did create some (scoring chances), so it wasn't like we sat back and hung on for dear life. At the end lately, it feels as if we're fatigued – the bench isn't necessarily deep enough – and at the end of some of these hard-fought games, I think fatigue sets in, so it seemed at the end – the last 8-10 minutes of the game, we were hanging on a little bit, but prior to that, we moved the ball around well, I thought we pressured when we needed to pressure.

“Not a lot of offensive threats from us – a few – but the boys were hungry, the defensive mistakes were almost none tonight, as where in games in the past, we've made boo-boos and that one minute of boo-boo comes back and haunts us - tonight, no mistakes that haunted us. I was happy the boys were proud to go up against an Edwardsville and come away with a tie.”

The Explorers had a couple of excellent chances that just failed to click. “When you have just a little bit of a chance, we really have to take advantage,” Burchett said. “There was one other one where Chris (Hartrich) created just that two-foot of space; I wanted him to pop it, he touched it one more time and against Edwardsville, boom – they're on it and disrupted it right away, so those little opportunities we're seeking out, we have to take advantage of it.”

The Tigers return home to Tiger Stadium for a 10:30 a.m. Saturday match against St. Mary's of south St. Louis city, while the Explorers next take on Belleville Althoff at 5 p.m. Monday on the road.

