

Marinko's 25, Strohmeier's 12 help Tigers hold off Collinsville 45-42

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – It was a good, hard-fought game on both sides on Friday night at Lucco-Jackson Gym, and in the end, Jack Marinko scored 25 points while Caleb Strohmeier added 12 to help Edwardsville to a 45-42 Southwestern Conference win over Collinsville.

The Tigers played good defense and were able to hit key shots in holding off the Kahoks.

“Well, I thought that our guys did a lot of things good,” said Tiger coach Mike Waldo. “I thought Collinsville played a good game; I thought their defense was good. They had some big, rangy guys in their box, and I thought they played that good. I thought we did a good job defensively, and executed some good things offensively, and got a win.”

The first half was a display of good defense for both teams, and each point scored was indeed hard earned. Marinko started finding the range in the third quarter, and it helped spell the difference.

“Well, I thought we executed a lot of things good offensively,” Waldo said. “I thought we passed the ball well, and screened well, and had some good timing. Jack was able to get open some, and he also created some shots for our other guys, who made some good baskets.”

It was a see-saw opening eight minutes, in which both teams traded baskets, but couldn't open a clear advantage, thanks mainly to the tight defense both teams played. Marinko hit his first three near the end of the period to tie the game 8-8, which was the score at the end of period, and in the second, the tight defense continued, where neither team could open more than a three-point lead. With about three minutes left in the half, after a Braeden Lemp free throw cut the Tiger lead to 15-13, the Tigers went into a delay game, but the Kahoks were able to get back-to-back baskets from Lemp and Marshall Harrison to take a 17-15 lead. Strohmeier hit a pair of free throws before the halftime buzzer to tie things up at 17-17.

The Kahoks started the second half in front with Keydrian Jones and Ray'Sean Taylor scoring around a three from Marinko to take a 21-20 lead. Another basket from Harrison extended the lead to three, but that would be the last lead Collinsville would see, as Marinko started to warm up. He hit back-to-back threes to give the Tigers the lead right back at 26-23, then Strohmeier scored from underneath to extend the Tiger advantage to five. A pair of Taylor free throws and baskets by Strohmeier and Harrison left Edwardsville with a 30-27 lead after three, and still anyone's game.

The Tigers started the final quarter with a three-point play from Marinko to extend the lead to six, but to the Kahoks' credit, they hung in, and were able to cut the lead to one on a second-chance basket by Lemp and a big three from Taylor. Strohmeier hit close in twice, sandwiched around a Lemp free throw, to extend the Tiger lead to 37-33. The teams then exchanged baskets, and another Marinko three-point play made it 40-35, Edwardsville with 3:24 left. After Harrison cut it to three from inside, R.J. Wilson scored from inside to push the lead to 42-37, and a Zane Baker free throw cut the lead to four. In the final minute, Collinsville cut the lead to one on a follow by Harrison, but a

breakaway lay-in by Wilson made it 45-42. A long inbounds pass after a time out was batted down by the Tigers, preserving the win.

The Tigers go to 4-1 on the young season, 2-1 in the conference, where good, competitive games are the norm.

“Well, I think any time you win a game in the conference, you’ve done good,” Waldo said, “because the conference is very competitive, and there’s a lot of good teams in it.”

The Tigers host Gateway STEM of St. Louis Tuesday night in a 7:30 tip, and Waldo is looking forward to the challenge of the Jaguars.

“A lot of athletes, a lot of good players,” Waldo said. “We’ll have to be ready to go, but it was a good win for us tonight, we’ll rest tomorrow, and then get ready to go.”

The Tigers play host to Granite City next Friday night, then go on the road to play East St. Louis Dec. 20.





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