

Tigers finish sixth in Collinsville-Prairie Farms Classic

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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COLLINSVILLE – Edwardsville's boys basketball team finished sixth in the 34th edition of the Collinsville-Prairie Farms Holiday Classic Saturday afternoon as the Tigers dropped a 69-58 decision to Quincy in the tournament's fifth-place game. EHS fell to 9-3 on the season while the Blue Devils went to 11-3 on the year.

“Their defense is good; they don't make many mistakes – they're fundamental,” said Tiger coach Mike Waldo of the Blue Devils. “They're big and rangy and athletic and the

combination of playing a defense you don't play much against – in fact, we haven't played against that defense all year – and the fact that they're good at it and have big guys doing it, that just made it hard.

“I think we had some instances of where we had guys open, we would just see them late; I think you have to credit them for that, their defense was good.”

Not only that, Quincy was hitting from outside all day. “They hit some perimeter shots that we weren't counting on,” Waldo said. “In fact, I actually think defensively, as far as what we were trying to do, I think our guys did a great job playing defense; I think they did really execute well what we were trying to do. They just made a lot of shots.”

Quincy's Jirehl Brock was a difference-maker for his team; he kept coming up with plays that kept the Blue Devils on top, especially on the defensive side of the ball. “Their defense is good,” Waldo said. “Their extended ball press is good; they cause you problems, but they don't give you a layup. Their core-to-core defense is good – they're just well-coached and they have athletic guys and that's hard to play against. You have to give them a lot of credit.”

The Blue Devils got on a run early on to pull ahead of the Tigers in the opening quarter, ending with Quincy up 16-8 on Edwardsville. Edwardsville found a way to stay within range of the Blue Devils, cutting the Quincy lead to 25-21 at the half before going on a run that kept the Tigers at bay before going ahead in the second half to put the game away; the Devils led 42-29 at three-quarter time and got ahead by as much as 21 midway through the final quarter.

Jack Marinko led the Tigers with 21 points on the day, followed by Caleb Strohmeier with 20 points, R.J. Wilson with eight points, Cole Scarbrough with five points and Malik Robinson with four. Quincy was led with 21 from Brock and 12 each from Aaron Shoot and Jaeden Smith.

The Tigers next head to O'Fallon for a Southwestern Conference game with the Panthers as part of a Mega Night event at the OTHS Panther Dome featuring the boys and girls JV and varsity teams against each other, the boys varsity game starting at 7:45 p.m., followed by an 11:30 a.m. Saturday game against Kansas City Rockhurst as part of the Highland Optimist Shootout in Highland.

