

Edwardsville MVCHA team honors seniors, falls 4-2 to Bethalto

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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INTERVIEW WITH EDWARDSVILLE COACH IS BELOW:

SEE INTERVIEW WITH BETHALTO COACH:

EAST ALTON – Edwardsville's Mississippi Valley Club Hockey Association team honored their four seniors prior to Tuesday night's game against Bethalto at East Alton Ice Arena.

The four seniors, Mitchell Davis, Josh Lavick, Micha Bell and Chance Lawrence, were recognized for their contributions to the program the past four years.

Edwardsville dropped a 4-2 decision to the Eagles, however, to take their MVCHA record for the season to 5-10-1 (11 points) with the division into two classes coming after Thursday's games; the Eagles improved to 3-9-3 (nine points); after Thursday's games, the league's 12 teams will divide into Classes 2A and 1A, with the top six teams going into Class 2A. The six teams in each class will play each other one more time before the league playoffs begin in early February, with the final standings in each class determining the first-round pairings.

“We got into a little bit of penalty trouble early in the game,” said Tiger coach Jason Walker. “That cost us – their goalie (Kyle Weslowski) played really well tonight, their

whole group played well. It was our last game before we go into final seedings for the playoffs, so it should be fun.

“In a way, it's a developmental team for us; these guys work hard. We want to rack up wins here and this team has that capability. We're excited for what's in front of us; we know we have a lot of room to improve and we'll get better.”

“I think we played well,” said Eagle coach Brayden Emerick. “They played well; it was a pretty good game and it was what we needed to start the rest of our season.

“So far, (the Eagles' season) has been a little rough to say the least, but I think we finally hit our turning point; we proved it tonight. We started off not as strong as we wanted to – especially these last couple of games, we've stepped up our game and it's been a really great season so far.”

Michael Dixon got the scoring started in the first period for the Eagles at 2:46 of the period with assists from Nolan Kahl and William Halwachs; Halwachs then extended the lead to 2-0 when he scored past Tiger goaltender Jonas Akeman. Justin Harper then halved the lead with under two minutes left in the second period when he beat Weslowski with an unassisted goal, but Alex Winter restored the Eagles' two-goal lead with Matthew Winter providing a helper to make it 3-1 in favor of the Eagles.

Kahl then made it 4-1 for Bethalto in the third period from a Clark Sasek assist, but the Tigers gave themselves a chance when Justin Bertles scored from assists by Matt Clark and Patrick Doolin. The Tigers pulled their goaltender down the stretch to go with a sixth attacker, but couldn't solve Weslowski to tie the game.

Edwardsville had 39 shots on goal, with Weslowski turning back 37 of them; Bethalto had 26 shots on goal, with Akeman recording 22 saves for the game. Bethalto closes out its opening part of the season with a 8:30 p.m. Thursday game at EAIA against East Alton-Wood River. The split into two divisions takes place following the game, with the schedule to be announced by the MVCHA.

