

Edwardsville Mid-States Hockey Association team is eliminated from playoffs

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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BALLWIN, Mo. - Edwardsville's Mid-States Club Hockey Association team went up against top-seeded St. Louis University High after managing to get into the quarterfinals of the MSCHA St. Louis Blues Challenge Cup Playoffs.

“It's definitely not how we drew it up as far as the finish goes,” said Tiger coach Jason Walker after EHS was eliminated by the Junior Billikens 6-1 Monday night in the second game of a two-game set at Queeny Park's rink in west St. Louis County Monday night; SLUH had won the opening game 5-0 over the Tigers in Affton, Mo, Saturday night, forcing the Tigers into a must-win game – had the Tigers won, they would have forced a deciding 10-minute mini-game to determine who would advance.

“They're a good team; we've played teams from all over the country the last few years, and they're as good as it gets,” Walker said of the Junior Bills. “They're as good as I've ever seen; they're going to be tough for whoever they have next.”

That the Tigers managed to get to the quarterfinals with their backs to the wall going into the final game of group play in the first round says something about the Tigers, Walker felt. “As I said, it's not where we wanted to be, but we've got a mentally tough team that keeps battling, no matter what.

“That says a lot about our leadership; it was just one of those things where you run into a team that certainly deserves it.”

Tiger goaltender Matthew Griffin found ways to keep SLUH off the scoresheet in the opening period, coming up with some good saves as the Jr. Billikens mounted the pressure on him; SLUH finally broke through in the second period with a six-goal explosion that sent them to the win. Henry Wagner had three of the goals for SLUH, with Joe Winklemann scoring twice and the sixth goal coming from Christian Berger; Wagner had an assist in the outburst while Winklemann had two helpers.

The Tigers managed to get on the board in the final period when Mitchell Oberlag at the 8:40 mark, beating Jr. Bill goaltender Brendan Rasch, but the Tigers could get no closer. SLUH outshot the Tigers 44-9 on the evening, with Griffin recording 38 saves and Rasch eight stops; both teams went 0-for-2 on the power play on the night.

Walker believes that the future of Edwardsville hockey is a bright one. “Just the group that we have – the core group we have coming back, there were a lot of young guys who played a lot of important minutes for us this year – we've got a bright future, that's for sure,” Walker said.

