

Edwardsville's Rachel Pranger is a key for team as post-season progresses

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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ht's finish of the IHSA Class 4A Belleville East Regional final certainly kept the fans of both schools on the edge of their seats.

A last-second shot from the Lancers' B'Aunce Carter somehow rolled away from the back of the rim to give Edwardsville a 41-40 win and send the Tigers to Monday night's Champaign Centennial Sectional semifinal, where the Tigers will take on Chatham Glenwood at 6 p.m.; a win would put them into the sectional final against Monday's other semifinal winner between Rock Island and Bradley-Bourbonnais at 7 p.m. Thursday, with the winner going to the Feb. 26 Illinois Wesleyan Super-Sectional against the Chicago Mother McAuley Sectional winner.

Friday night's win kept the Tigers undefeated on the season with a record of 27-0 for the year.

“We just had to work hard and come out knowing we could do it, and we did,” said the Tigers' Rachel Pranger following the game. “It's a whole different ball game right now; every team knows it's their last chance to make it and they'll play as hard as they can; we will too.”

The stretch run Friday was a nerve-racking one for the Tigers. “We just had to come together as a team,” Pranger, a senior who led Edwardsville with 13 points on the night, said. “We had to work together as a unit and I think we did that pretty well.”

Last year's Tiger team reached the state final, losing to Geneva; while Edwardsville wants to get back to the final, the Tigers are taking a one-game-at-a-time approach to the postseason. “We've got to take things one game at a time,” Pranger said. “We'll focus on Monday now and see where it goes from there. We'll get ready the next two days and we'll work hard to for Monday.

“They're a really good team; they have some good scorers; we'll just have to have really good team defense.”

The two teams played each other in their season-openers in the O'Fallon Tournament in November; the Tigers took a 66-40 win over the Titans in that game.