

Tigers test O'Fallon but ultimately fall in extra innings

by John Hough, Sports Writer
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O'FALLON - The Edwardsville Tigers had to play catch up for the vast majority of the game between the loaded O'Fallon Panthers, but clutch, timely hitting would force extra innings.

Eventually, in the bottom of the eighth inning, the Panthers put two runners on base with no outs and pushed across the game-winning run on a single to right field by Nick Boone. The Panthers defeated Edwardsville 7-6 at Blazier Field in O'Fallon.

Panthers coach Jason Portz was pleased with his lineups persistent scrappiness that kept them ahead for the vast majority of the game and ultimately got them the victory.

"I've said all along that I think we got a really tough team and that's what we kinda showed today," O'Fallon coach Jason Portz said. "Things didn't necessarily go our way. We didn't play the best defense. We didn't run the bases extraordinarily well, but we were scrappy at the plate."

The Panthers record improves to 16-1-1 while the Tigers fall to 12-5.

It's been a tough road to hoe for Edwardsville thus far in the Southwestern Conference as they're now tied for second place with Collinsville at 4-2. Nearly every game has been a barn burner.

"I don't think we've led in the middle of a game it seems like," Edwardsville coach Tim Funkhouser said. "As the course of the game went on we started taking better at-bats and had some clutch hits to get us back in. It was a hard-fought battle, and they were able to get that run across there at the end. That would've been a nice one to come back and get."

In the top of the first inning, sophomore sensation Drake Wescott launched a solo home run over the left field fence, which was his third of the season.

Wescott finished 2-for-2, including two walks and scored three runs. Reid Henderson and Joe Copeland each tallied two RBI.



The Panthers proceeded to put a crooked number on the scoreboard in the bottom half of the inning plating three runs. Two innings later, Matthew Albritton pounded a solo shot of his own over the left field fence to put O’Fallon up 4-1.

Albritton went 2-for-4 with three RBI. Quinn Lowery was 2-for-3, and Hayden Juenger went 1-for-3 and knocked in three RBI.

Edwardsville's Grant Schaefer gave up six hits and five earned runs in five innings of work. He struck out three and walked three.

After surrendering the home run to Wescott, Brayden Arnold was throwing smoke, but the Tigers would make things difficult for him.

Joe Copeland lashed a two-run single to make it 4-3, and in the following inning, Edwardsville loaded the bases with nobody out. Arnold, however, would get the next two batters out but hit the Josh Olh in the back that sent across the tying run.

O'Fallon got two runs back to take a 6-4 lead, but with two outs in the top of the sixth, Wescott roped double, and Reid Hendrickson knocked a two-run home run to the left field yet again to level the score at six all.

"He's got power. It was great to see him get a pitch to hit and put a good swing on it. He's hit the ball really well for us and has been a staple for us in the middle of the order, which is what we need," Funkhouser said.

Arnold tossed 5.2 innings with ten strikeouts and two walks while giving up six hits and four earned runs. Adam Drewry came on in relief and threw a solid two innings with four strikeouts and gave up no hits.

"It's a good win, and we've had a lot of good games with Edwardsville," Portz said. "Ultimately, the fact is that it's another conference game. They're a good club, and I guarantee you that Tim is going to have them ready to play in June and we need to be on top of our game if we happen to see them again."















