



# Tigers dodge 10 walks, blank Redbirds 4-0 in 4A regional semifinal

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EDWARDSVILLE – Three runs in the bottom of the first helped set the tone for Wednesday night's IHSA Class 4A Edwardsville Regional semifinal game between the host Tigers and Alton.

Tiger pitching, however, had to overcome 10 walks they gave up throughout the game; every time the Tigers seemingly were facing trouble, pitchers – especially Reid Hendrickson and Chase Gockel – found ways to get around the walks with timely strikeouts or inducing groundouts to keep the Redbirds off the scoreboard.

Those timely outs helped preserve a two-hit shutout for EHS as the Tigers went on to take a 4-0 win over the Redbirds to advance to Friday afternoon's regional final against O'Fallon, who took a 5-0 win earlier in the day over Quincy. The Tigers-Panthers game will take place at 4:30 p.m. Friday at Tom Pile Field, with the winner meeting the Belleville East Regional winner May 30 in an Illinois Wesleyan Sectional semifinal game; the time and site are to be determined by the IHSA, with the sectional final set for 11 a.m. June 2.

Edwardsville went to 25-9 on the season with the win, while Alton was eliminated at 16-19 on the season.

“Reid continued to battle and he wasn't as sharp as he had been the last few outings,” said Tiger coach Tim Funkhouser. “He continued to battle and make pitches and Gockel was good and (Matthew) Boyer came in there at the end; out pitchers keep going up there and putting up zeros – that's huge.”

EHS' three-run first was marked by key RBI hits from Jack Cooper and Josh Ohl as well as the Tigers taking advantage of a couple of Redbird miscues, Funkhouser felt. “Those guys have been working hard all year,” Funkhouser said. “Ohl's been real hot lately and Cooper's been continuing that for awhile – just a great presence. That really lengthens our order; we've been talking about that – it's just important for us to take (at-bats) and make it tough on their pitching.”

“We had a tremendous amount of opportunities,” said Redbird coach Todd Haug. “That's the story of today; we had 12-13 baserunners and eight or nine walks – we just didn't get the hits. If we take care of business – a tremendous amount of runners in scoring position, or the tremendous amount of opportunities – we did not capitalize.”

The Tigers got started in the first when Drake Westcott and Hendrickson drew walks with one out; Cooper then singled in Westcott to put the Tigers up 1-0 before Cole Hampton reached base on a dropped third strike to load the bases and bring up Ohl, who



lined a two-RBI single that brought in Hendrickson and Cooper to put EHS up 3-0. Another run came home in the fourth when Hendrickson grounded into a double play that brought in Joe Copeland to extend the lead to 4-0.

Hendrickson himself kept finding ways to get out of situations where the Redbirds could have scored, including a two-out, bases-loaded jam in the third, with strikeouts at key times before being lifted for Gockel with two out in the fifth; Gockel inherited a bases-loaded situation and responded by striking out Ben Mossman to keep the game at 4-0.

Boyer came onto the mound in the top of the seventh with two out and Jackson Brooks at third, striking out Adam Stilts to end the game and send Edwardsville to the regional final.

Cooper led the Tigers with a 2-for-3 game with an RBI and run scored, with Blake Burris 1-for-3, Westcott 1-for-1 with two walks and a run scored, Hendrickson a run scored, Ohl 1-for-2 with two RBIs and Copeland 1-for-3 with a run scored; Alton had hits from Brooks and Mossman on the day.

Edwardsville pitching combined for 14 strikeouts on the day, with Hendrickson fanning nine in getting the win and conceding the two Redbird hits; Gockel dismissed four by strikeout and Boyer one. Wesley Laaker took the loss for Alton, striking out six and conceding four runs (two earned) on six hits; Zach Knight fanned two in relief for the Redbirds.



