

Tigers Under-15 Baseball Team splits games Thursday and Friday

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EDWARDSVILLE – The Edwardsville Tigers under-15 baseball team lost a tough decision for the first time this summer season, dropping a 3-2 decision to the Missouri Gators under-15 club in a game played at Roy Lee Field on the campus of SIU-Edwardsville Friday afternoon.

After conceding a run in the second inning, the Tigers scored twice in the bottom of the fourth to take the lead. Evan Funkhouser singled to open the frame, went to second when Cameron Grant drew a walk, and scored on Drew Gvillo's single to right. Grant scored on Pierce Boyer's sacrifice fly to give Edwardsville a 2-1 advantage.

The Gators took back the lead in the top of the fifth on a one out single, an RBI triple and a passed ball that scored the eventual winning run. The Tigers did threaten in the bottom of the seventh, getting runners at the corners with two out, but a strikeout ended the game.

Funkhouser went two-for-three in the game, while Gvillo, Jack Basarich and Quinn Weber had the other three hits for the Tigers. Grant pitched five innings for the Tigers, allowing two runs and seven hits while striking out one and walking four. Basarich pitched the final two innings, allowing one hit and no runs, striking out one and walking another.

Cameron Grant's two-run double pushes Tigers to 3-2 win

EDWARDSVILLE – The Edwardsville Under-15 baseball team started its 2018 summer season in style as Cameron Grant's two run double in the bottom of the sixth inning gave the Tigers a come from behind 3-2 win over the Rawlings Tigers Black team of St. Louis in a game played at the Edwardsville Sports Complex Thursday afternoon.

Starting pitcher Conrad Heppler held Rawlings to two runs in five innings of work before giving way to Evan Funkhouser, who shut out Rawlings over the last two innings to gain the win in relief for the Tigers.

“It was a good comeback win,” said Edwardsville coach Tim Funkhouser. “Our guys continued to battle, and Conrad, I thought, did a great job on the mound of making pitches and keeping us in the game. They've got some big guys out there, and guys who have good swings too. So to limit them to two runs over five (innings) was very impressive.

“And we had that big sixth inning for us,” Funkhouser continued, “and pushed those three runs across. A couple of those guys got it started with those base hits. Hayden

(Moore) got it started with a walk, and then we strung a couple of hits together, and Cam Grant's big hit of the day was the difference maker for us. That was a good win.”

The Edwardsville roster consists of players from the Tigers' freshman team this past spring, and the learning of how to play the Edwardsville style is a constant process.

“It's a constant process,” Funkhouser said. “We've got 15 kids on this 15-U team, and we look forward to competing each day, and we saw a kid on the mound that had a pretty good breaking pitch today, and we didn't do as well with it, so we'll be able to expand on that. It's going to be a good experience this summer, and we look forward to the battle.

Both starting pitchers on each team – Heppler and Rawlings' J.D. McReynolds – were sharp in the first three innings. Heppler allowed three hits while striking out one, while McReynolds to only one hit while striking out three.

Rawlings got on the board in the fourth, starting with a lead-off double from Justin Coleman. Landen Johnson singled home Coleman to give Rawlings the lead, and after a force at second, Jack Weber was hit by a pitch and McReynolds singled home Matt James with the second Rawlings run. McReynolds took second on the throw to third, but Heppler got Gavin Oswald to fly out to center, and Landen Roberts grounded to third to end the inning.

It stayed that way until the fateful bottom of the sixth, starting with Moore's walk off of relief pitcher Bryce Anderson. Kyle Modrusic followed with a single, and Funkhouser, who relieved Keppler in the top of the inning, singled home Moore to pull Edwardsville to within 2-1. Grant followed with a double to the right center field alley to score Modrusic and Funkhouser to give Edwardsville the lead. Grant advanced to third on a wild pitch one out later, but Edwardsville couldn't score.

In the top of the seventh, Kyle Favre doubled to center with one out, but was thrown out at third by the shortstop on a nice play. Coleman was hit by a pitch and Johnson singled to load the bases, but the game ended when Funkhouser picked off Coleman at second for the game's final out, preserving the Tigers' win.

Grant went two-for-three with the game winning RBI, while Evan Funkhouser, Modrusic and Zac Zoelzer were each one-for-three.

The Tigers' U-15 team do have goals they would like to accomplish, but the important thing for the club is having fun.

“We're going to get out there and play some games,” Funkhouser said, “we'll have some workouts, we'll take some batting practice, and we'll have some fun along the way each day. And I think there's a lot that can be learned, whether it's the 15-U, the 17-U or the guys in college. So we look forward to that challenge.”



[Steven Spencer also contributed to this story.](#)