

# Explorers and Tigers play to a high-quality draw

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EDWARDSVILLE - If you were looking to see the two best soccer teams in the [Riverbender.com/Edglentoday.com](http://Riverbender.com/Edglentoday.com) area face off to determine who indeed is No. 1, then you'll have to wait a little bit longer.

The Marquette Catholic Explorers and Edwardsville Tigers played out to a 0-0 draw Tuesday night at the District 7 Sports Complex in Edwardsville.

Despite the scoreline, both sides proved to be well-organized and created several chances, but were unable to break through. The Tigers, in particular, owned the majority of possession and had numerous half-chances at goal, but half-chances is emphasized thanks in large to Marquette goalkeeper Nick Hemann who put in a man of the match performance.

The six-foot-six senior came off of his line four times to cut out what would have been terrific scoring opportunities for the Tigers. The best and most crucial of actions came with under two minutes when an over the top through ball had star Edwardsville forward, Ethan Miracle in on goal, and surely would get the first touch. However,

Hemann beat him to the ball outside of the 18-yard box and cleared it away to save the Explorers.

“He’s got great size athleticism,” Edwardsville head coach Mark Heiderscheid said about Hemann. “We’re through probably two or three times, but he comes way off his starting position. Honestly, against a normal keeper, we would have a couple of goals. I thought he did a superb job.”

“You always have to be ready for that type of stuff even in the big and small games no matter where you are and where you play,” Hemann said. “It’s the just matter of being able to read the ball in the air and being able to tell if it gets past our defense or not.”

Marquette remains undefeated at 8-0-3 while Edwardsville goes to 5-2-2 and was shutout for the second time this season.

Despite the difference in records, the Tigers, a perennial large school powerhouse in the entire St. Louis area and large parts of Illinois, have considerable depths of attacking /midfield talent. The Explorers do as well, but Edwardsville demonstrated their dominance of possession, particularly in the first half. Marquette was well aware and respected that.

“This is one of those games where we knew the chances were going to be minimal,” Marquette head coach Joe Burchett said. “We had to work hard, and some of our boys never left the pitch. On a hot night, it was a lot of hard work. As far as the game went, we were certainly in it, and I think we played with them pretty good.”

This is Burchett’s third year at Marquette, and this is the third time he’s come away with a draw against Edwardsville.

“Joe has them very organized. They go ahead and sit in very well. We’re keeping , but it’s a lot more difficult to find gaps seams,” Heiderscheid said. “You always want to win. For me, you’re creating chances and not executing well in the final third. That final ball we put in wasn’t good enough.”

The Explorers kept a high defensive line while conceding the majority of possession, which allowed the Tigers' dangerous attacking options to have space in behind the back four and Hemann.

The first half was dominated by the Tigers, although the Explorers were closest to finding the back of the net midway through the half when an Edwardsville defender blocked a shot from Aaron Boulch inside the box.

In the second half, Marquette grew more into the match.

“We did get better as the game wore on,” Burchett said. “At first maybe it was the nerves or the turf or the fans? more than a little apprehensive. certainly was the better team at the beginning of the game, but we did get better. Once we started to string some passes together, the confidence grew.”

14 minutes into the second half, Stephen Hasse had a shot attempt saved by Edwardsville’s Gabe Noll, and seconds later Bryce Glisson was down on Marquette’s end cutting inside on his right foot, but his shot was straight at Hemann who caught it.

Four minutes later, Cooper Nolan had an opportunity to shoot while in on goal, but a Marquette defender got in the way at the last second to deflect the shot but injured Cooper in the process. He would not return and has an apparent right foot injury.

With 19:20 left, the Explorers won a free kick, and Hasse lofted the ball close to goal, which was received by reserve striker, Luke Atkinson, who headed it about a foot wide of the far post.

Marquette’s best chance came with 12 minutes to play.

Boulch, on a counter-attack, was fed a through-ball in between two defenders and had room. With an Edwardsville defender cutting off his pathway just as he was about to enter the box, Boulch chipped the ball over Noll, which looked destined for the back of the net. However, it hit off the crossbar of the field goal just above the soccer goal.

Miracle and Glisson each had a goal-scoring chance in the final ten minutes, but Hemann saved both of them.

Additionally, this was the first time all season Marquette had been blanked, which snapped a 20-game streak of finding the back of the net. The last team to do that? This same Edwardsville team 356 days ago back on September 28, 2017.

Ultimately, Heiderschied is happy to keep a team with plenty of quality like the Explorers off the score sheet. However, he goes back to emphasize how disappointed his, hungry attacking players are not to do so as well.

“To shut out a team like Marquette, there’s something to be said about that. They’re not a little good, they’re a really good team,” Heiderscheid said. “In a way that’s good. We’re a very good program. Marquette is a very good program. One of the best team’s they’

ve ever had. Forget the one to get a one-goal lead. What we have as attackers we'll be disappointed if we don't get three or four goals. That's their mentality. Good luck doing that against , but for them, that's what they feel. It's very difficult."











