

# Hemann holds solid foundation in net for Explorers

by John Hough, Sports Writer  
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ALTON - Manuel Neuer is considered by many to be the best goalkeeper in the world.

He's well known for his ability to be a sweeper keeper, which is a term to describe a goalie who is quick off their starting position to clear a pass away from an opposing attacker who managed to get in behind the back four.

Marquette Catholic senior keeper, Nick Hemann might be the best at his position not only in the Riverbender area but perhaps all of St. Louis Metro area. Maybe even, the state of Illinois.

He's been the starting goalie for three years and played a massive part in helping Marquette win the IHSA Class 1A state championship in 2017. Hemann has posted 27 shutouts in his career, including eight through 15 games this season.

Last week, Hemann kept clean sheets against Edwardsville and Freeburg to help the Explorers maintain their undefeated record which is currently 10-0-4.

The six-foot-six netminder was particularly busy against the Tigers last Tuesday. He kept out Edwardsville's loaded attacking options off the board for then the second time of the season, while being quick on his feet. Hemann completed numerous last-second clearances coming from several yards off his line in the 18-yard box.

"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."

The closets call, and most critical of clearances came in the final two minutes when Ethan Miracle chased down an over-the-top through ball. It seemed like the striker would get the first touch, but Hemann's precision and taller frame got there first.

"He's got great size athleticism," Edwardsville head coach Mark Heiderscheid on Hemann's performance. "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."

"It shows our composure and how well play together. We've really stepped it up," Hemann said. "Honestly, the first few games were shaky, but now we've progressed."

Most of the time for the past couple of seasons Hemann isn't needed much for the Explorers as they usually control the majority of possession, especially this year. However, in most soccer games the opposition will get at least one good chance and Hemann must be mentally ready.

Two days after Edwardsville against Freeburg, he was hardly called into action, except once in the first half. After a failed corner kick clearance by the Explorers, the ball fell to a Freeburg striker close by the goal with a clear view. Hemann made a reflex save with his left hand, which redirected the shot out of bounds.

“You can see him out there getting flustered because we hadn’t scored the goal yet. We were pounding and pounding and pounding, and then you make one little boo-boo, and they’re in the game,” Marquette head coach Joe Burchett said. “Nick’s very competitive, and I like that about him.”







