

Tigers play crucial homecoming game against Belleville West

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - Edwardsville (4-3 overall, 3-1 in the league) hosts Belleville West (6-1, 3-1) in the Tigers' homecoming and Senior Night game tonight at Tiger Stadium with a 7 p.m. kickoff.

The Tigers and Maroons are both coming off big wins last week. Edwardsville defeated Belleville East on the road 54-20 while West won at home over Collinsville 64-14.

Tiger quarterback Kendall Abdur-Rahman leads a very potent Edwardsville offense, rushing for 610 yards and 11 touchdowns on the season thus far. Abdur-Rahman, who has committed to playing at Notre Dame, is also 16 of 37 in passing for 375 yards and eight touchdowns. The lethal running duo of Justin Johnson, Jr. and Dionte Rodgers lead the Tigers' rushing attack. Johnson, a sophomore, has run for 517 yards on 79 carries and eight touchdowns, while Rodgers has chipped in with 19 carries for 131 yards and a touchdown.

Rodgers is also the leading receiver with 12 catches for 214 yards and two touchdowns. Chase Moore is next with eight receptions for 183 yards and three touchdowns, and Lavontas Hairston has six catches for 107 yards and two scores.

Jacob Morrissey and Ryan Strohmeier are the leading tacklers on the Tiger defense, each having 30 solos on the season. Morrissey also has 26 assists while Strohmeier has 22. Strohmeier last week returned an interception 28 yards for a touchdown, the second straight week a Tiger defender has had a pick-six. Rodgers leads the team with five interceptions with Ethan Young close behind with three.

Jackson McCloskey is the leader of the Maroons' offense, going 102 of 167 passing for 1,588 yards and 28 touchdowns, while D.J. Johnson is the team's leading rusher, with 828 yards in 127 attempts and 10 touchdowns. Jordan Bruce has 26 carries for 212 yards and two touchdowns. Dominic Lovett is West's leading receiver with 33 receptions for 720 yards and 17 touchdowns. Will Lanxon is next with 29 catches for 458 yards and six touchdowns, Will Shumpert has 13 catches for 173 yards and four touchdowns and Joey Kossina has 15 catches for 113 yards.

Ka'Lon Carraway and Clarence Davis are the leading tacklers for the Maroons with 22 each, while Carraway has 22 assists and Davis 13. Keith Randolph is next with 18 solos, 21 assists and two fumble recoveries, followed by three players – Jamarquis Goldsby, Anthony Graham, and Lee Griffin – with 13 each. Davis also has three interceptions to lead the team.

Edwardsville head football coach Matt Martin said he expects a large crowd tonight against Belleville West. He said this is a pivotal matchup for both teams.

“Belleville West always does a good job,” he said. “Their quarterback is a two-to-three-year starter and is accurate with the football and knows where he wants to go. They have a good running back and receivers who are playmakers and their line plays well. They are well-coached and don't have a lot of weaknesses. We have to limit them in their run game and can't give up big plays.”

Homecoming is always exciting, but at the same time can be a distraction, Coach Martin said.

“You worry about the distractions as a coach but if I look back I think we have a pretty good record in homecoming games.”

Coach Martin said his team has been hit by the injury bug but in his program, he attempts to have reserves ready to come in and play and pick up where the starters left off.

[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)