

Edwardsville travels Friday to Evanston for first IHSA 8A football playoff matchup

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
October 26 2018 11:40 AM



EDWARDSVILLE - On Friday night, Edwardsville (6-3), plays at Evanston (7-2) in a 7 p.m. kickoff in the IHSA Class 8A playoffs.

The Tigers running game has been their biggest strength this season, with senior quarterback Kendall Abdur-Rahman leading the way with 89 carries for 806 yards and

14 touchdowns. Sophomore Justin Johnson, Jr. is right behind with 111 rushes for 728 yards and 10 touchdowns, and senior Dionte Rodgers has chipped in with 29 carries for 216 yards and four touchdowns.

In addition, backup quarterback Luke Oglesby has 30 runs for 132 yards and five touchdowns, while Kenyon Johnson has six rushes for 118 yards.

In the passing game, Abdur-Rahman is 27 of 56 for 515 yards and 11 touchdowns, while Oglesby is 28 of 45 for 383 yards. Rodgers leads the receiving corps with 19 catches for 298 yards and three touchdowns, while Justin Johnson has nine catches for 95 yards and a touchdown. Lavontas Hairston has six catches for 107 yards and two touchdowns, while Jack Cooper has four catches for 35 yards and a touchdown.

Jacob Morrissey and Ryan Strohmeier lead the way defensively for the Tigers, with Morrissey the team's leading tackler with 39 solos and 30 assists. Strohmeier is right behind with 36 solos and 28 assists along with a fumble recovery and an interception. Ethan Young has 22 solos and two assists to go along with a fumble recovery and four interceptions. Jordan Lewis has 12 solos and nine assists to go with a pair of interceptions, and Connor Hinterser has 10 solos and eight assists. Rodgers leads the team with five picks.

Edwardsville head coach Matt Martin said Evanston has a pretty balanced attack offensively.

"Evanston has a really good running game inside and outside and two or three dynamic receivers who can catch screens and take short passes, along with guys who can beat you if they go deep," he said. "They have a Division 1 running back and a quarterback with a strong arm and is an accurate passer. They are solid defensively. Teams have not scored a lot of points on them or a lot of big runs."

Coach Martin said at this point in the season in the playoffs in Class 8A, teams are normally evenly matched. He said his team is going to try to continue to apply pressure defensively and hold on to the football offensively.

"It comes down to who plays well that night," he said. "It's always the goal of a coach to continue to improve through the season. I had a team that was 1-3 on the year and ended up 5-4 and played a good O'Fallon team competitively in the playoffs. You hope as a coach to continue to improve all season."