

Tigers score four power play goals, get New Year off on right foot with 6-3 win

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EAST ALTON – The Edwardsville hockey team got 2019 off to a great start by scoring four times on the power play, including their first three goals, as the Tigers defeated Francis Howell of Weldon Springs, Mo. 6-3 in a Mid-States Club Hockey Association game Tuesday night at the East Alton Ice Arena.

The Vikings were called for nine penalties in the game, leading to the four Edwardsville power play goals, and also had two players ejected during the game.

“The power play looked good, we got the opportunities, which was nice,” said Edwardsville coach Jason Walker, “they buried a few. So it was a good way to start off 2019.”

The Tigers were also able to take advantage of a pair of five-on-three situations to score.

“Yeah, the power play looked good, especially early,” Walker said. “The only negative for us is to give up of those shorthanded goals there, but other than that, it was a pretty clean game.”

Going into the game, Walker knew that Francis Howell was one of the better teams outside their own Municipal Division, and his team was prepared for the game.

“We don’t get to see them very often, not being in our conference,” Walker said, “but we knew that they were one of the top teams in the league, and one of the stronger teams outside of our conference. So we knew it was going to be a good test. They played well, and I thought our guys came out, they were prepared, and they did a nice job.”

And the fact that six different players scored for the Tigers fits a familiar theme for the team this season: Everybody contributes.

“That’s kind of been the theme for the whole season,” Walker said. “Twenty guys on this team, and everybody’s contributed offensively, defensively, up and down the lineup. That’s a good thing, especially this time of year.”

The penalties, ejections and undisciplined play definitely hurt the Vikings throughout the contest.

“Well, it’s difficult to win a game when you’re shorthanded 22 minutes of the game,” said Francis Howell coach Larry Bumb, “and they’ve got a very good team with really good players. Five-on-five, I thought we were right there with them, but you’re just not going to win too many games when 22 of the 45 minutes, you’re shorthanded.”

The ejections especially hurt Francis Howell late in the game, when the Vikings scored twice to get back into the thick of things.

“No, not at all,” Bumb said. “And it definitely got us shorthanded late in the game. We come back from 5-1, and make it all the way to 5-3, and I feel like we’re taking it to them, and then we just somewhat ran out of gas. Again, it’s just difficult to win hockey games when you’re not playing disciplined, and get 22 minutes of penalties, including two five-minute majors.”

It was still a very admirable comeback for the Vikings, and Bumb praised his players for not giving up.

“Yeah, I’m really proud of the team that they didn’t give up,” Bumb said. “I felt we actually did a really good job killing penalties; we just had too many. But like I said before, down 5-1, and still battling back to 5-3, and really taking the play to them. I give my guys a lot of credit for not giving up.”

The game started off pretty evenly, with both teams having chances, and goalies Mason Young of Edwardsville and Drew Callaway of the Vikings making good saves. But at 9:35, during a mix-up in the Edwardsville zone, Ethan Ormson was called for a major for butt-ending and given a game misconduct, which gave the Tigers a five-minute power

play. Edwardsville got the first of their power play goals at 13:05, when Sam Gibbons fired home a shot that beat Callaway to the near post to give the Tigers a 1-0 lead. Will Schuster got the lone assist on the play.

Early in the second, the Vikings were called for too many men, and then were called for a second bench minor when it was discovered that a player on the ice was inadvertently left off their lineup card, giving the Tigers a five-on-three. Edwardsville capitalized when Gibbons fed Mark Tucker, who slotted home the puck at 2:01 to give the Tigers a 2-0 lead.

It became 3-0 with Tanner Wyatt serving a double minor. Parker Terch took a pass in the slot from Mitch Oberlag and scored at 8:17. Then at 12:21, Jack Sumner scored off a pass from Cam Gillen to make it 4-0. The Vikings countered seven seconds later at 12:28, when Issac Poisson took a pass from Kyle Vossmeier and scored to cut the Tiger lead to 4-1, which was the score after two periods.

Late in the period, Edwardsville got another five-on-three when Trevor Hug was penalized for high-sticking, and then Quinton Rash received a major for spearing and a game misconduct. The Tigers were able to get the power play goal early in the third, when Schuster scored unassisted to make it 5-1.

The Vikings started to mount a comeback at 5:06, when, with Gillen off for slashing, Wyatt scored off a nice pass from Alek Nelson to make it 5-2, then at 8:46, Hayden Scheck scored from assists by Nelson and Ben Jackson. The Tigers ended the scoring at 13:02, when Justin Harper took an Oberlag pass on a break and scored to make the final 6-3 for Edwardsville.

The Tigers outshot Francis Howell in the game 39-23.

The Vikings, who fell to 9-5 on the season, do have a young team, and are picking up experience with every game.

“Well, we’re a very young team; I’ve only got three seniors and three juniors,” Bumb said, “so we’ve got a lot of underclassmen, and I hope a game like this just goes to show that it’s the score on the clock that matters, not the toughness on the ice. We’re moving forward, we’re just gaining experience through this season, and a close game like this against Edwardsville does us a lot of good.”

Bumb also tipped his cap to both his goalies and to the Tigers.

“I thought my goaltenders did the best they could,” Bumb said, “I give credit to them. Their goalie played really, really well, they’ve got a few really, really good players. My hat’s off to them, they played disciplined.”

The Tigers, who improved to 4-9-2, meet Chaminade Friday night at the Affton Athletic Association rink in South County in a 9:45 p.m. face-off, and Walker knows his team will be raring to go.

“We’ll be ready Friday,” Walker said.





[Chris Rhodes also contributed to this story.](#)