

# **Tigers win marquee wrestling meet over Cadets 36-27**

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer  
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EDWARDSVILLE – One of the premier high school wrestling meets of the season may have been delayed by snow, but it was certainly worth the wait.

In a meet postponed from Friday because of Winter Storm Gia, Edwardsville rallied from an early deficit and got wins in key bouts to defeat CBC 36-27 Tuesday night at the Jon Davis Wrestling Center.

It was a meet that featured stars on both sides of the mat, and the atmosphere inside the arena was electric from start to finish.

“No, I don’t think anyone got disappointed from the action tonight,” said Tigers head coach Jon Wagner. “There were a lot of close matches, there were some marquee matches, there was a lot of hard fighting by both teams. So it was an exciting environment, an exciting match, and we feel real fortunate that we came out on top.”

The final match of the evening the Tigers’ Luke Odom and the Cadets’ Joshua Saunders, both ranked number one in their respective states in the 145-pound weight class, was the main event of the evening. And although Saunders eventually came out on top, it turned out to be a top-notch bout.

“Oh, it was no doubt a main event,” Wagner said with a laugh. “There were some horses out there going real hard at 145 pounds tonight. It was a great match, unfortunately, Josh was able to get that first takedown on Luke, and was forced to come from behind, and it kind of changed the perspective of the match, but Luke kept fighting hard. He’s going to use it to empower him for the rest of the year, I know he will.”

In another feature match, Caleb Harrold came from behind in the dying seconds to tie Lucas White in the 170-pound bout, then won it in overtime to get Edwardsville rolling.

“Yeah, it sure was. It sure did get us going,” Wagner said. “That was a marquee match earlier in the meet. If that one goes the other way, that flip-flops things. We always like winning overtime matches, we believe in our conditioning, the kids believe in their conditioning, and I thought he did a great job winning that match.”

And the win over a high-quality program such as CBC is a big feather in the Tigers’ caps going into the remainder of the season.

“Yeah, because CBC’s a great program,” Wagner said, “so it is a nice feather. They’ve got some studs, they’ve won some great matches this year, and we feel very fortunate to beat them. They’re well coached, and yeah, we feel real good. We did some things, Josh Anderson bumping up to heavyweight, giving up 60 pounds like that, that was just inspiring to his teammates, inspiring to his coaches, and coming out with that win, that was just awesome.”

The Cadets jumped out to an early 9-0 lead in the first two matches, starting with Kyle Prewitt pinning Connor Satella in the 152-pound bout, scoring the fall at 2:13, then Will Edgar taking the 160-pound match over A.J. Scheffel 8-2. The Tigers got their first points of the evening at 170 pounds when Harrold rallied in the final seconds with an escape and takedown to tie White at 4-4, then in the overtime period, scored the takedown to win 6-4, making the team score 9-3 for CBC.

The Cadets made it 15-3 with the night’s only other fall, as Jack Darrah pinned Sam Clark at 5:28 in the 182-pound match to give CBC a 15-3 lead. The Tigers then went on a seven-match winning streak to give them control, starting at 195 pounds, with Sam Martin defeating Luke Ebers 8-1, then Blake Moss being awarded a forfeit win at 220 pounds to cut the lead to 15-12. Then in the 285-pound match, it was Josh Anderson stepping in against a bigger opponent in Harrison Diffley, and Anderson winning what turned out to be a key match in the meet, holding off Diffley 6-3 to tie the team score at 15-15.

?It was a key match because the Tigers took two forfeit wins – Grant Matarelli at 106, and Connor Surtin at 113 – to give Edwardsville a 27-15 lead. The Tigers increased their lead with the result of the 120-pound match, as Dylan Gvillo defeated Jacob Fryer 6-4 to give Edwardsville a 30-15 lead. The Cadets were then penalized a team point when the CBC coaches were called for unsportsmanlike conduct afterward, making the score 30-14.

Noah Surtin then gained a forfeit win at 126 pounds, clinching the meet for the Tigers at 36-14, but the Cadets swept the final three bouts, starting at 132 pounds with Vinnie Zerban winning over Jack Evans on technical superiority 16-1 at 2:00, then Wyatt Henson taking an 18-3 technical fall win over Mason Wilke, making the score 36-24.

The final match of the evening was the main event between Odom and Saunders, and it was a dandy. Saunders grabbed an early advantage with a takedown and two-point near fall, but Odom rallied in the second and third periods to draw level at 4-4. But Saunders scored a takedown late and didn't look back, winning the bout 7-4 and making the final team score 36-27 Edwardsville.

The Tigers' focus now turns to a tournament on Saturday at Columbia, Mo., Hickman and conference dual meets against Belleville East and East St. Louis before turning to the IHSA tournament series.

“Well, we've got a tournament this weekend; that's our focus right now, which will be a great tournament for us to get prepared for the end run here,” Wagner said. “So we'll get some more matches there, and then we'll be winding it up, and getting ready for the end run.”

The IHSA meets are looming ahead, but for Wagner, the focus is on the Hickman tournament and working out his lineup for the road ahead.

“Right now, that's not our focus right now,” Wagner said, “we're trying to get healthy. We've got some depth, you saw that tonight; we had two guys out of our lineup tonight, at 52 and 60. We have some depth, so we've still got to figure out our lineup, and we've still got some plays to make, so we'll see what happens. But we've just got a lot of guys contributing; I think that'll help us in the end. But right now, we're focused on this tournament Saturday, and getting ready for regionals and sectionals.

“I thank everybody for coming out, I thank the other team for making this happen in this great environment, and I hope everybody enjoyed themselves,” Wagner also said.





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