

# **Wilson's 33rd Minute Goal, Defense, Help Knights Defeat Tigers 1-0 in Metro Cup Tourney**

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EDWARDSVILLE – Jordan Wilson’s goal in the 33rd minute, combined with a stout defense that played well throughout the game, helped give Triad a 1-0 win over Edwardsville in a Group B contest of the Metro Cup tournament Tuesday night at Tiger Stadium.

It was both team’s second contest of both the tournament and the season, and it was a hard-fought match for the entire 80 minutes.

The Tigers did have some good chances to equalize during the second half, but couldn’t score.

“We learned a lot from today,” said Edwardsville head coach Abby Federmann. “We knew it was going to be a physical game, we knew they were going to come out trying to win the ball from us every chance they got; they definitely did that. They secured the middle of the field and 50-50 balls, and they like to play that long ball and use their speed up top. They just happened to slide one by us.”

The Knights caught the Tigers out of position on a quick counterattack, which helped lead to the goal.

“We were just a little bit out of position,” Federmann said. “Our outside back made a beautiful run forward, and then, they countered on us too quick, that we didn’t react. That’s just learning to play with each other and understand our outside backs are fantastic, and they’re going to make runs forward, and we’ve got to cover her. And it was just a matter of that.”

The Triad defense was up to the challenge in the second half, turning back some good Edwardsville opportunities.

“We had a really hard time creating anything in the final third, we couldn’t get any shots off,” Federmann said. You can’t win games if you don’t shoot the ball, so we’ve got some things to work on, but that’s what the Metro Cup’s great for, is you learn a lot you as a team and the other teams in the area.”

Triad coach Matt Bettlach felt that his team was ready to play against a Tiger team that’s very tough to beat on their home ground.

“This is a tough place to play,” Bettlach said, “as good as Edwardsville’s always is, and when you come to their field, you’d better come ready to play. I thought in the first half, we came ready to play. The game was kind of back-and-forth a little bit, I don’t think

there a ton of chances created, but we did some really good ball movement, and we finally got a chance to get a ball through to a runner, and she put it away. And then the second half, as we were talking to the girls about the wind in the second half.

"It's like all of a sudden, the wind picked up a little more. So we were aware of the wind, but I told the girls Edwardsville's too good to sit back, they're going to come at you. And they did. In the last 20 (minutes), they put pressure on us. They were just a couple skips away from getting one in. But I was happy with the way our girls played in the back, and our goaltending."

The Knights' defense did a great job in holding off the Edwardsville attack, not allowing very many shots.

"I thought our girls did a good job of keeping them outside our 18," Bettlach said, "and then if they did break the line on the outside and got down and got a cross in, our girls were there to clean it up, win it, get the ball out. So, our defense played really well tonight."

The Tigers had a great opportunity in the opening seconds of the match, but Triad's defense cleared the opportunity away, then the Knights had a chance off a free kick in the second minute, which was cleared, and on a scramble in front of the Edwardsville goal on the ensuing corner, the ball hit off the inside of the near post and somehow stayed out, allowing the Tigers to clear. In the fifth minute, Triad had another good shot, but Rachel Hensley, the Edwardsville goalie, was there to collect the ball.



Play settled down and was mainly a midfield battle up until the 14th minute when a Gracie Giacoletto shot went over the top of the goal, then a through ball from Triad was cleared by the Edwardsville defense to keep the game scoreless. Both teams had good opportunities after that, but were stopped by either Hensley or Payton Radcliffe in the Triad net, or cleared out by the defense.

In the 33rd minute, Wilson was able to get a good through ball, broke through the Edwardsville defense and slotted the ball past Hensley and into the back of the net to give the Knights a 1-0 lead. Both sides then had a chance each, but couldn't convert as Triad took their lead at halftime.

The second half started with Edwardsville having a pair of chances to equalize, but both went for naught, then Wilson having a shot to double Triad's lead, but Hensley was there to make the save. Later, in the 47th minute, the Tigers' Libby Doak was booked for a hard foul from behind, and in the 51st, on a free kick at the edge of the Triad box, Edwardsville got a good cross in, but the header just missed, keeping the score 1-0 for the Knights.

In the 61st minute, a good pass in the box resulted in a Rileigh Kuhns chance, where she was knocked down, but appeals for a penalty were denied. On an ensuing corner, the original shot was blocked at the Triad defense, and a rebound shot was missed. The

Tigers kept putting pressure on the Knights' goal, but the defense was equal to the task. Edwardsville did have one last chance in the final seconds, but its shot went over the top of goal, preserving the 1-0 win for Triad.

Both Radcliffe and Abbey Counts shared the clean sheet for the Knights.

Although very early in the season, the Metro Cup is a very good way for teams to see how they stack up early on, and it's a very good early test as well.

"When you play the Metro Cup, it's a good test," Bettlach said, "because you play all the top dogs. And we played Columbia last night, who's probably the (Class) 1A favorite, and you come in and play Edwardsville, who's always a 3A favorite, or 3A heavyweight, and then we turn around and play Springfield, and we could play them in the playoffs. So you'd better come ready to play when you play in the Metro Cup."

And despite the loss, things are still looking good for Edwardsville.

"Oh, absolutely," Federmann said. "I'm still very enthusiastic about how the season will go."

And Federmann gave a shoutout to her backfielders, who enjoyed a good game themselves.

"I want to give a shoutout because I do think my back line did a very good job today," Federmann said. "There's a lot of leadership coming from some of the younger girls, freshmen. And we get to see Triad on Monday, so it'll probably be a whole different game."

Both sides are now 1-1 on the very young season and conclude the group stage Wednesday at Columbia. Triad plays Springfield in a 5:30 p.m. kickoff, followed by Edwardsville against the host Eagles, with the kickoff coming at 7:30 p.m.

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