

Edwardsville's Drake Wescott returns for Tigers at first base, is ready for another strong year

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – Edwardsville baseball junior first baseman Drake Westcott enjoyed a successful sophomore year in 2018, and is hoping for an encore in his junior year with the Tigers.

During preseason practice, Westcott felt very optimistic about the upcoming 2019 campaign.

“Yeah, we’ve got a whole bunch of returning starters on the infield,” Westcott said during a recent interview after a practice session, “and everybody got stronger, faster in the weight room over the winter. We’ve got a whole bunch of guys that can really pitch, so we’re looking good this season.”

Westcott will usually be in the clean-up spot in the lineup and is willing to do what he can to drive in runs and help Edwardsville rack up the wins as things progress.

“I’m just trying to drive in as many runs as I can,” Westcott said, “get on base, take walks, do everything I can to help the team win, really.”

Westcott is a patient hitter, working the count against the pitcher to draw the walk, and if a pitch is in the strike zone, swing away.

“I just, you know, if it’s a strike, I’m going to swing,” Westcott said. “I just work the count, not going to chase anything out of the zone, but if it’s a strike, I’m going to be swinging at it.”

Westcott feels like he put in much hard work during the off-season, and is ready to enjoy a very successful season.

“I think I put a lot of time in the off-season,” Westcott said, “like fitness training, speed and agility, and a lot of hitting. I’ve just been sharpening up the areas that I need to patch up on my game, and make better and improve. So hopefully, I’ll have just as good a year as last year.”

And as usual, the Tigers schedule offers many challenges ahead, as Edwardsville will take on some of the best in Illinois.

“Absolutely,” Westcott said. “Our first tournament, we’ll be playing, I think, three really, really good teams from up in Chicago, so it’ll be fun. Go out, play good, and hopefully come away with the wins.”

And needless to say, the team’s ultimate goal in returning to the state Class 4A finals, which will be held the weekend of June 7-8.

“That’s the goal,’ Westcott said, “Just everyone does their part, everybody pitch in, play hard, and hopefully, head back to state.”