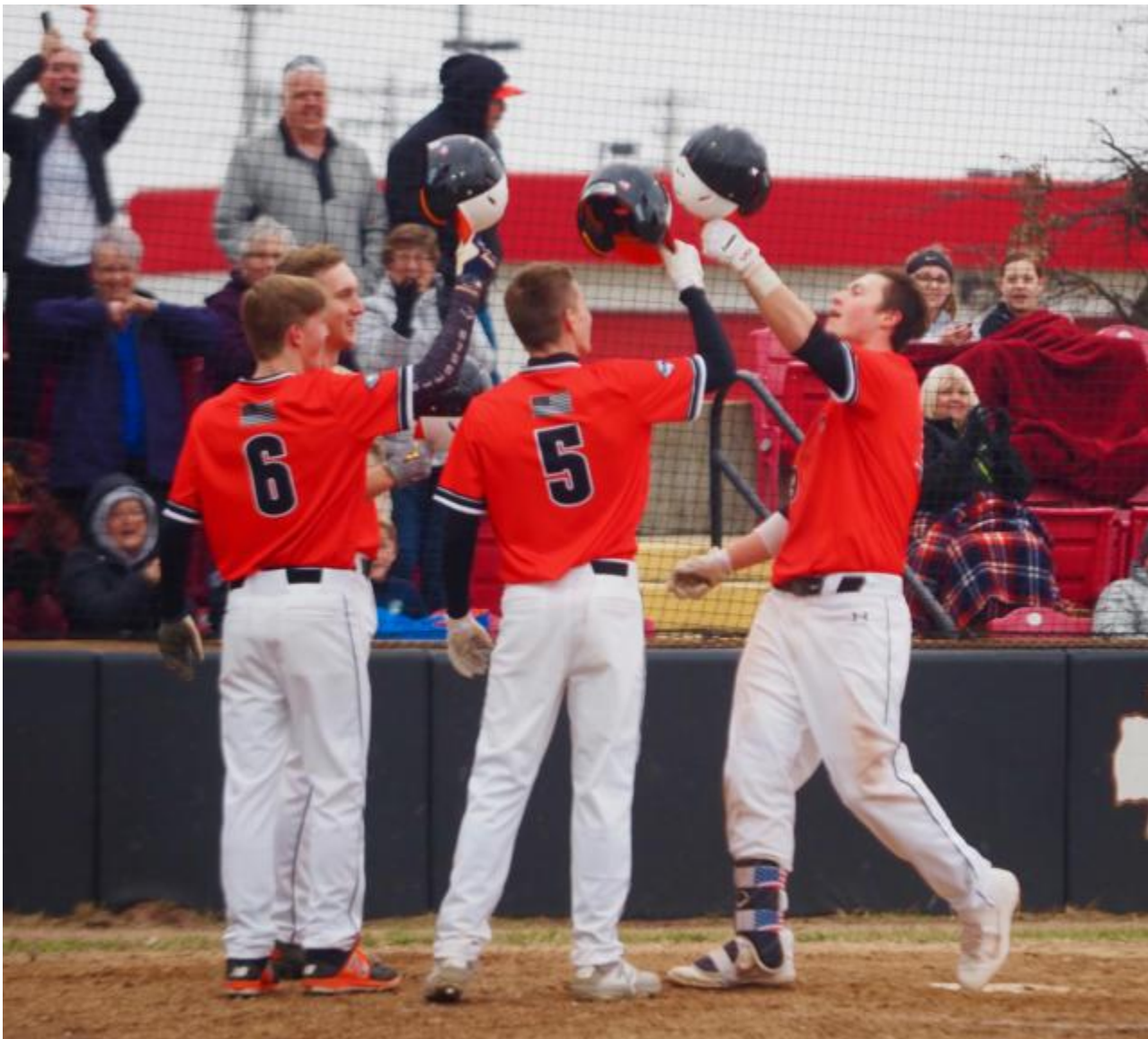
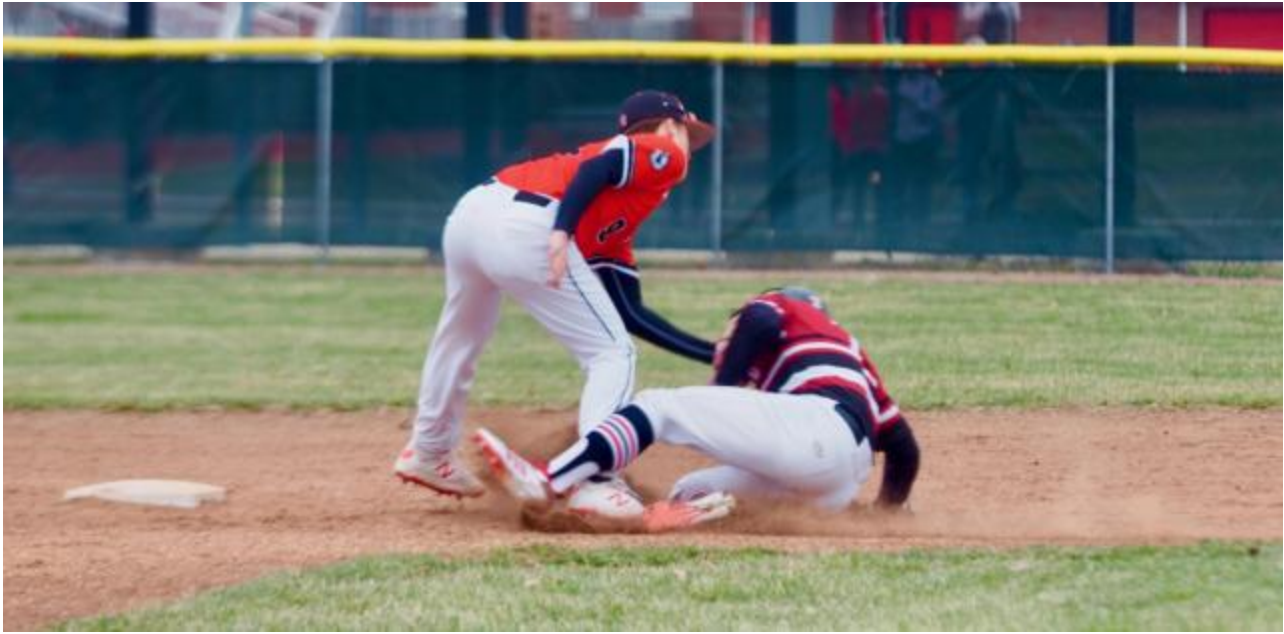
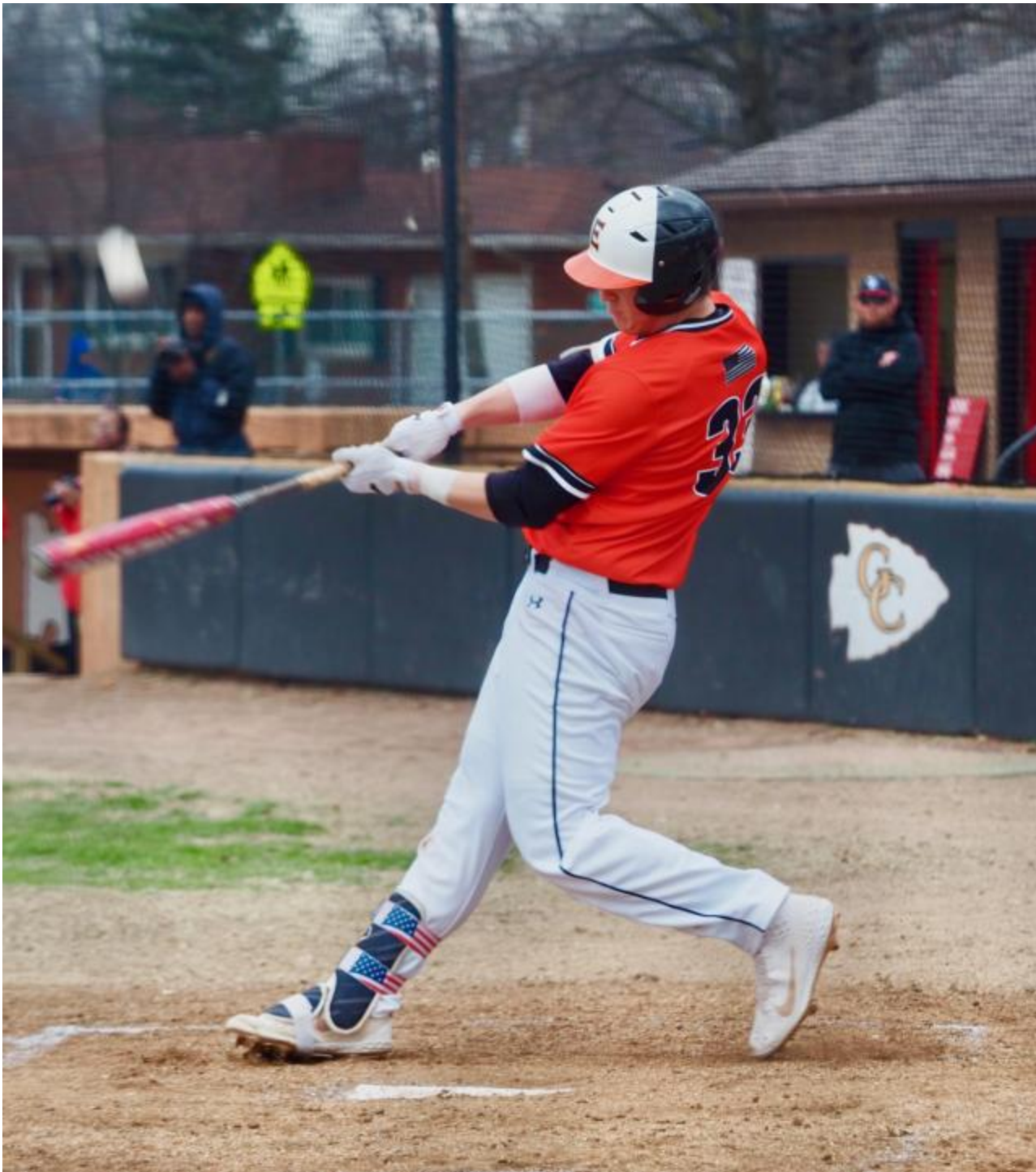


# Late-inning Heroics Guide Tigers Past Granite City in Comeback Victory

by John Hough, Sports Writer  
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GRANITE CITY - The Edwardsville Tigers got hits when they absolutely needed to.

None most bigger than in the top of the seventh inning tied at 4-4 against the Granite City Warriors. Up stepped junior catcher, Jacob Kitchen.

In his first career varsity at-bat, Kitchen smacked what proved to be the game-winning home run over the left field fence that gave the Tigers a 5-4 come-from-behind victory on Wednesday afternoon at Granite City High School.



“The pitcher was dealing, and I was looking for my pitch. It was an inside fastball, and I just put a good swing on it,” Kitchen said. “I didn’t realize it was out until I rounded first base and saw coach Ohlau and he said ‘It’s over the fence, baby.’ It was really special to me since it’s my first varsity at-bat and I could do something special for the team.”

At the moment, Kitchen plays mostly on the junior varsity team, but that might change after yesterday.

“Kitchen’s hit was a clutch hit,” Edwardsville coach Tim Funkhouser said. He hit a couple of opposite-field missiles the other day in a JV game, and I know every day he’s going to do his best. He put a charge in that ball.”

Gavin Huebner picked up the win for the Tigers (2-2) after taking over for Matthew Boyer in the fifth inning. Huebner pitched two and one-third innings of shutout ball while striking out three batters and allowed two hits.

“Huebner came in and did an outstanding job in relief just making pitches,” Funkhouser said. “He shows a cool, calm demeanor.”

Boyer allowed four runs (two earned) on five hits while striking out eight batters.

Granite City (2-3), got out to a 3-0 lead in the bottom of the second thanks to a two-run double by Brennen Haddix and an RBI single by Cole Bartling.

Junior first baseman and Louisville commit, Drake Wescott, changed his early season hitting fortunes in the game. In the top of the third, with two on and nobody out, Westcott blasted a three-run home run over the left-center fence to tie the game at 3-3. He ended up going 2-for-3 at the plate.

“We’re knocking off the rust, and we’re starting to play well, so I think this win will be a huge momentum boost,” said Westcott. “I’m just trying to relax. I got my pitch today in the second at-bat and hit it to left field. It was on the outside half of the plate, and I barreled it. I knew it was gone as soon as I hit it.”

In the bottom of the fourth, Bartling slapped a ground ball down the third base line that was deemed fair by the home plate umpire, which allowed Clayton Miller to score from first base after some confusion by the Tigers that led to an argument.

Edwardsville would get that run back in the top of the sixth when Blake Burris singled home, Josh Ohl. Burris ended up going 2-for-4.

With a full week under their belt, the Tigers and Funkhouser are happy with the way his players were able to fight back for a victory but noted they have a boatload of areas to improve and learn from yesterday.

“We’ve got a deep squad, so it’s finding different opportunities and guys seizing the moment and taking advantage,” Funkhouser said. “We’ll keep competing and get better each day. That’s the fun part of the season. With the schedule that we play, it tests us, and we didn’t pass all the tests today. We have to get a lot better in a lot of those if we want to be in these moments and to be able to overcome different things, but that’s part of learning.”





