

Edwardsville Scores On First Two Shots Of Match, Wins Over Alton 3-0 In Senior Night Game

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – The Edwardsville girls soccer team celebrated its annual Senior Night on Tuesday – and won the Southwestern Conference Championship outright as well.

The Tigers honored seniors Emma Sitton, Ava Walls, Sarah Kraus, Libby Doak, Emma Hensley, Libby Bateman, Katrina Agustin and Kiara Delgado, along with Paityn Schneider, who is out for the season with an injury, and team managers Ericah Leone and Samantha Boyer, along with their families in pregame ceremonies, then got three goals in the opening half and went on to a 3-0 win over Alton at Tiger Stadium.

Tigers' head coach Abby Federmann couldn't be any prouder of her team.

“A great way to end their regular season,” Federmann said. “We do play on our turf next week, but the regular season is over, they can leave Edwardsville High School as the first team in Edwardsville High School girls soccer history to win a conference championship outright, and that's something to be proud of.”

As for the match itself, the Tigers were able to score on their first two shots on the game, taking full advantage of their opportunities when they came.

“Yeah, absolutely,” Federmann said. “For the last week of practicing, in competitions, we've been planning on coming out, and our goal was to score three goals in the first half, just to kind of prove to ourselves that we could score more than three goals in one half to beat Alton, and kind of validate or invalidate the loss that we had to them with the rainout. So those girls came out, and did exactly what we had hoped and planned. They knew that tonight could be a history-making night, and on top of it, it was our Senior Night, and it was outstanding.”

Although the Redbirds did concede the three goals in the first half, the team kept battling throughout the match, and did everything right but finish.

“I think the first half, for sure, really, the scoreboard doesn't reflect the effort level,” said Alton head coach Gwen Sabo. “I think that in the first half, we were much more dangerous. The difference was Edwardsville put their first two shots of the game in the back of the net. Our first two shots did not. They capitalized on their chances, and we just didn't.”

Edwardsville got its third goal on a 39th minute penalty kick goal by Rileigh Kuhns, which proved to be a backbreaker.

“Yeah, I guess a foul's a foul,” Sabo said, “but I would be very lenient calling a silly foul like that as a PK, but you can't change that.”

The Redbirds did have some very good things happen throughout the match, with some things that please Sabo.

“We were doing some good things offensively, in the offensive third that I haven't been seeing,” Sabo said. “We were connecting, we were making runs, we were working off of each other as a team. We just have to finish.”

And Sabo agreed that everything didn't go to as planned.

“Yeah, it's a little tough to win games when you don't score,” Sabo said. “But this might be one of two or three games that we've given up three goals all season long; normally, our defense is is very, very strong. Kudos to Edwardsville, they finished the few chances we gave them.”

The match started out evenly, with both teams making probing runs into the other team's backfield. In the ninth minute, Sitton got a ball into the Alton penalty area on a nice pass from Bateman, and slotted the ball into the lower left hand corner to give the Tigers a 1-0 lead.

It became 2-0 ten minutes later, when Payton Federmann got a great through pass from Kuhns, broke in alone on goal, and fired the ball past goalkeeper Madison Miller to double the Tigers lead. Late in the first half, a trip inside the box caused the referee to point to the penalty spot, where Kuhns scored in the 39th minute to up the Tiger lead to 3-0, where it stayed at halftime.

Both teams had numerous good chances in the second half, but both Miller and Rachel Hensley were equal to the task as Edwardsville took the three points and the conference championship 3-0.

The Tigers are now 11-8-0 on the season, 8-1 in the conference, and conclude the regular season on Thursday at Collinsville. Federmann knows that the regular season finale will be good preparation for the upcoming post-season.

“We've got Collinsville on Thursday at Collinsville; that'll be a good game to help prepare us to play (Belleville) West next week,” Federmann said, referring to her own regional tournament. “And if we beat West, we're going to be playing the winner of (Granite City) and Collinsville.”

Federmann likes her team's chances of going on a long run in the state tournament series.

“I think our chances are great,” Federmann said. “Nobody’s seen us at 100 percent, and right now, we’re virtually at 100 percent. We’ve got one girl out with injury, but we’re able to support her. I’ve got Kuhns back, I’ve got (Hannah) Bielicke back, everybody’s healthy, everybody’s happy, and we’re playing really well, so the sky’s the limit.”

Meanwhile, the Redbirds are now 13-9-1, 6-3 in the SWC, and are also hosting a regional. Alton starts off May 15, hosting Belleville East, and would play the winner of O’Fallon and Quincy in the final on May 17. But first, Alton plays their final regular season game against East on Thursday, and Sabo is also looking forward to what lies ahead.

“Our last conference game is Thursday at home against Belleville East,” Sabo said, “then we turn around and play them at home on Wednesday for regionals.”

And Sabo also likes the Redbirds chances of making their own run as well.

“Truthfully, I think we have a very good chance of winning regionals,” Sabo said. “especially on our home grass, and the two teams that we’d be potentially playing, I like our chances.”

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