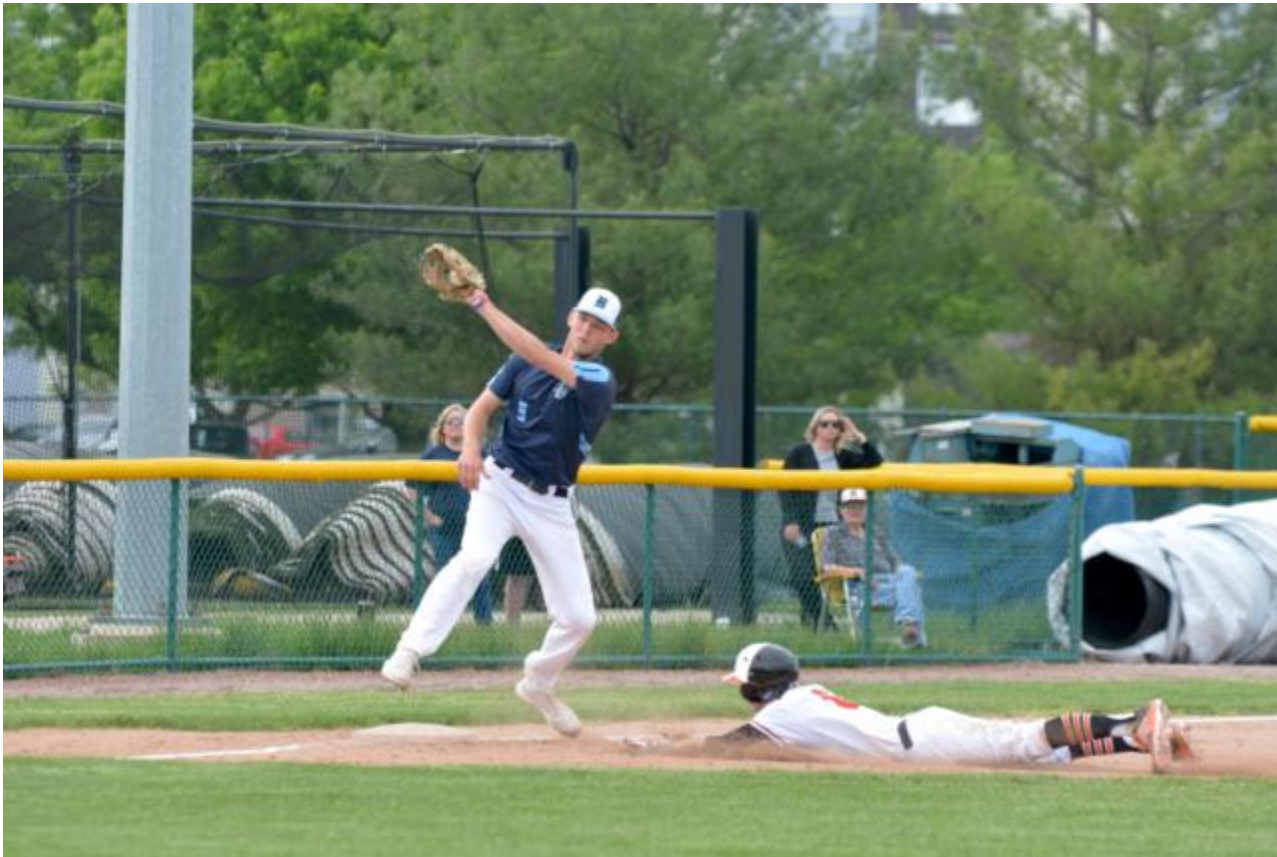
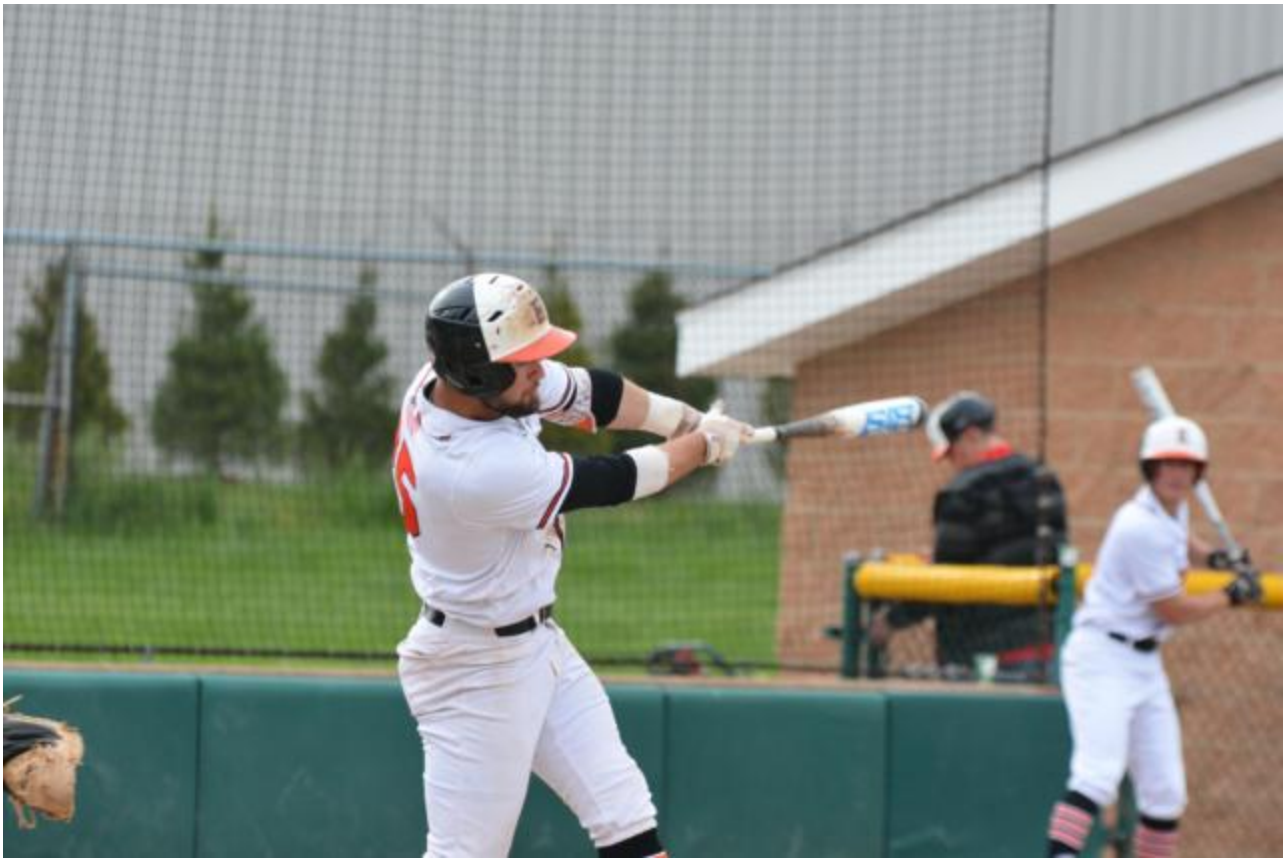


# Schaefer Allows One Hit, Tigers Score Five In Fourth, Defeat Belleville East 10-1

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer  
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EDWARDSVILLE – Grant Schaefer pitched a magnificent game, allowing only one run and one hit in five-and-one-third innings, while Blake Burris drove in three with a bases-clearing double as part of a five-run fourth inning as Edwardsville defeated Belleville East 10-1 in a Southwestern Conference game Wednesday afternoon at Tom Pile Field.

The game was originally scheduled for Thursday but was moved up one day due to forecasts of stormy and rainy weather in the St. Louis area for Thursday.

Schaefer's great game was perhaps his best outing of the season thus far, and it's an attribute that he's had all season.

"Grant's been great for us on the bump all year," said Tigers' head coach Tim Funkhouser. "I talked to him when he came out, like, he just brings it every day and just continues to make pitches. He doesn't like to give the other team anything, and he plays with that fine edge of being a competitor, but also being able to control his emotions, and that's a great attribute to have."

That attribute is a big plus for Schaefer when he pitches.

"Oh, absolutely," Funkhouser said. "I mean, we hand the ball to any guy on our pitching arsenal, and they go out, and one, they cherish the opportunity to pitch, and they, they

want to be able to make sure they do their job each time. The preparation and everything they do goes into it, but the execution of it is always the most important part. But you have to do the preparation leading up, and he's definitely doing that."

In addition to the five-run fourth, Max Ringering hit a three-run homer in the sixth that furthered the Tiger lead, and getting that big hit was something that didn't happen in Tuesday's game at East, won by Edwardsville 6-2.

"Yesterday, we played them at their place, and we were able to piece together some runs, and score in multiple innings," Funkhouser said, "but we really didn't have that big hit, and I thought one of the big hits of the game was (Joe) Copeland hitting a double down the other way, and then later in that big inning, just being able to tempo down and not try to do too much, and just try to square up line drives. And our guys did a great job of doing that, and it was good to see Ringering put a charge in that. I think he had a base hit on a 2-0 count to left, and I think he had a base hit on a double to right, and then, for him to hit one out of the park, on a line there, was impressive. So, he's been great for us all year, and it was good to see him rewarded on the day for all the hard work he's been doing."

The Tigers got off to a quick lead in the first by scoring without a hit. Hayden Moore walked to start everything off, stole second, went to third on a fly ball, and scored on a ground out to first base to take the early 1-0 lead. Moore then made it 2-0 in the third, again drawing a walk and stealing second, then advanced to third on a wild pitch, then scoring on a second wild pitch.

Meanwhile, Schaefer conceded his only hit in the second, on Gage Cruz's double to the left-center field fence. Kannon Walker then hit into a fielder's choice to get Cruz out, but then got Brock Barton to fly to right and Ryan Gunter to pop-up to second to end the inning.

The Tigers broke it open in the fourth, and it all happened with two out. After a leadoff double to the opposite field by Copeland, Josh Ohl was hit by a pitch, and after back-to-back fly outs that kept Copeland on second and Ohl on first, Logan Cromer doubled home Copeland to make it 3-0, then Moore was hit by a pitch to load the bases. Blake Burris cleaned everything out with a double to right center to drive home three runs and make it 6-0 for Edwardsville. Burris went to third on a balk, Drake Westcott walked, and Ringering doubled home Burris with the fifth run. Copeland flew out to center to end the inning.

Schaefer kept going strongly, at one point, retiring nine in a row before running into a spot of trouble in the fifth, starting with Barton being awarded first base on catcher's interference. But Schaefer got Dillon Donjon to ground into a double play to get out of the jam.

The Lancers got their only run in the top of the sixth, starting with Zachariah Georgian reaching on an error, which brought in Jonathon Yancik to pitch. An errant pick-off throw went awry, sending Georgian to second, where he scored the Lancers' only run on another error. Yancik got out of the inning with no further damage,

In the bottom of the sixth, with two out, a Burris single and a Westcott double brought in Ringering, who hit a line shot to left that went over the fence for a home run to make it 10-1. A strikeout ended the inning, and Gavin Huebner had little trouble retiring the Lancers in the seventh to make the 10-1 final.

The Tigers are now 25-4, and will have their next home game on Friday against Jersey, with a 4:30 p.m. start, then conclude conference play with a home-and-home set next Tuesday and Thursday against O'Fallon. The win over East was a key one in terms of conference play, and Funkhouser is looking ahead to next week's games, along with how the conference race shakes out.

“Yeah, we clinched a shared opportunity,” Funkhouser said, “and we have an opportunity to control our own destiny against O'Fallon next week, but we're also preparing for the postseason. The seeds came out yesterday, and the pairings came out today, and Belleville East could be a team we could face if we're fortunate to win our first game, and they their first game. But we just want to get better over the next couple of weeks, and put ourselves in the best situation for that, as well as try to wrap up the conference solo.”

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