

Rileigh Kuhns Does It Again, Scores Winning Goal In Dying Seconds As Edwardsville Defeats Collinsville 2-1 In Regular Season Finale

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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COLLINSVILLE – Edwardsville girls soccer junior forward Rileigh Kuhns has made a career of scoring big goals in the final seconds of matches at Collinsville’s Kahok Stadium, and on Thursday night in the regular season finale, she did it again.

Kuhns’ strike in the 79th minute, on a ball that rolled past the Collinsville defense, and went inside the far post into the corner of the goal, giving the Tigers a 2-1 win. In the same fixture last season, Kuhns scored in the final seconds to help Edwardsville earn a 4-4 draw.

“Yep, this is the third time in three competitions versus Collinsville that Kuhns has come up with a big goal,” said Tigers coach Abby Federmann. “Last year, she scored a goal to tie with 30 seconds. After the game, she told me she just likes to stress me out, wait until the last second,” Federmann said with a laugh. “I’m happy that we all worked as a unit at the end there, and really just kept the pressure on. Had that goal not gone in, and made more of a cross, we still had numbers up, and I think that we would have scored, so, group effort.”

It was a very hard fought game by both sides, and with the win, the Tigers now have some momentum as the IHSA Class 3A playoffs start next week, with Edwardsville hosting a regional tournament.

“Absolutely, these girls, the momentum is definitely up,” Federmann said, “and we’re seeing a lot of different adversities, so I think we’ll be very well prepared for the postseason, and next week against (Belleville) West.”

Edwardsville struck in the 10th minute, getting a goal from Emma Sitton off a free kick situation in front, where Sitton slotted the ball home to give the Tigers a 1-0 lead. The lead held firm until the 34th minute, where Mikaila Chrisman took a through pass and put the ball on the inside of the near post and into the net to draw Collinsville level at 1-1. Appeals for offside were not given.

In the 37th minute, a mixup in communications between the Kahok defense and goalie Claire Rendleman led to near-disaster for Collinsville, as the ball got away and rolled just past the post wide, avoiding an own goal. The Tigers created a chance right before the halftime siren, but Rendleman was there as the half ended 1-1.

The Kahoks came out in the second half, and had some good chances in the opening 15 minutes, but time and again, the Edwardsville defense and goalie Rachel Hensley were there to thwart the opportunities, keeping it at 1-1. In the 58th minute, Libby Doak went down with an injury after missing a tackle, and had to be helped off the pitch. Doak’s status is unknown.

In the 61st minute, Hensley had to make a big save off a bad-angle header by Mariah Siverly that was labeled for the near post, keeping the score level at 1-1. One minute later, a misplayed ball led to a glorious chance for Hannah Bielicke, but the shot went wide.

The Tigers had another chance off a free kick in the 62nd minute, but the shot deflected out of play, then in the 66th minute, a great pass went through, but Edwardsville was called offside to negate the chance. Three minutes after that, Payton Federmann had a big opportunity, but Rendleman made the save, and Bielicke sent the rebound high and wide.

In the 69th minute, a scramble in front of the Collinsville goal gave Edwardsville another big chance, but the ball was cleared off the line by Lydia Fluss to keep it 1-1.

After the scramble, Rendleman was booked for dissent, and had to come out by rule. With the reserve goalie injured and unavailable, Caite Knutson donned the goalie's jersey temporarily until Rendleman was able to go back in.

Play was getting more physical as the time wore down, and in the 72nd minute, Faith Liljegren was brought down in the box, and appeals for a penalty weren't given. In the 78th minute, Zoe Ahlers made a nice move to get away from a defender, and had a big chance, but her shot went barely over the top, keeping it 1-1. Collinsville then had a chance on a counter, but Hensley was there to keep it level.

In the 79th minute, the Tigers found the winner, as Kuhns got a foot on the ball to deflect a pass, and the ball rolled past the Kahok defense and Rendleman into the lower left corner to give Edwardsville a 2-1 lead. The Edwardsville defense didn't allow a decent chance in the dying seconds as the Tigers took all three points.

Edwardsville concludes the regular season 12-8-0, 9-1 in the Southwestern Conference, while Collinsville finishes 9-10-2, 5-5 in the conference, and will play in the Edwardsville regional next Wednesday. The Tigers play West at 4 p.m., while the Kahoks face Granite City at 6 p.m, with the two winners squaring off May 17 in the final. Federmann thinks that the Tigers are ready to go into the postseason on a positive note.

"I think so," Federmann said. "The regionals are always, I think, the toughest for us, because, one, we're going to see West for the third time this season, and it's hard to beat a team three times. And then, we're going to see the winner between Collinsville and Granite. Those are two hard games we've already played, so it's going to be tough. But if we can get through next week, I'm very confident."





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