



Maria Smith's Two Home Runs Win Regional Championship For Edwardsville, Looks Ahead To Sectional And Rest Of Postseason

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
May 26 2019 1:11 PM



EDWARDSVILLE – Edwardsville softball second baseman Maria Smith hit a pair of home runs, including a dramatic game-winner with one out in the bottom of the seventh inning, to give the Tigers a 6-5 win over Collinsville in the IHSA Class 4A regional final Friday evening at the Edwardsville Sports Complex.

Smith knew that she had to try to get on base to give her team a chance in the seventh. She did just that – and much more.

“I just honestly knew I needed to get my team a baserunner out there so we could give ourselves a chance,” Smith said in an interview that followed the game, “and it just happened that made it all the way around,” she said with a smile and laugh.

The two pitches that Smith hit for home runs – a lead-off solo shot in the first and the game-winner – had something in common, and Smith simply attacked the pitches.

“Definitely right in my zone where I was looking,” Smith said, “and I just attacked. I knew that my best chance was to attack the pitch instead of waiting for it to come to me.”

Collinsville did come back from a 5-1 deficit to tie the game in the top half of the seventh and kept battling all afternoon. Smith gave credit to the Kahoks for their efforts.

“In post-season, anybody can win, and it was a toss-up,” Smith said, “and they kept fighting, and their big thing is that they’re so loud, and their energetic. And we decided to keep our heads high, and that’s tough facing.”

Even when Collinsville rallied back to tie the game, the Tiger players stayed positive and kept going.

“We didn’t hang our heads,” Smith said, “and we just kept going, because we knew that we still had one more at-bat, the game wasn’t over, and you have to compete every inning, top, and bottom, and that’s what we did.”

The Tigers advance to the sectional on Tuesday afternoon at Rita Menke Field at Belleville East. Smith and the Tigers are looking forward to the challenge.

Smith also feels that Edwardsville has a good chance to enjoy a deep playoff run.

“I think we have a good shot,” Smith said. “Our offense is pretty strong, and even though we’re a young team, we flow together, and we work together well. So, hopefully long.”