

Nolan's Brace in Extra Time Gives Tigers 2-1 Conference Win in Home Opener

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – Cooper Nolan scored a brace (two goals) in the first half of extra time, and it was enough to give Edwardsville a 2-1 win over O’Fallon in the Southwestern Conference and home opener for the Tigers Tuesday evening at Tiger Stadium.

The two sides battled through regulation goalless before Edwardsville broke through in the first half the two 10-minute halves of extra time.

“It was really a tale of how the game was flowing,” said Tigers’ head coach Mark Heiderscheid, “because at first, we kept the ball well, then we got tired, and O’Fallon did a great job of being able to move the ball forward. In the last 20 minutes of the first half, I thought we were effective at getting the ball wide, and getting the ball into Brennan (Weller), and he’s very effective at undoing the defense. The second half was pretty much event, then we went into extra time, we continued to press and did a good job of passing. And finally, we put a ball inside to Cooper, and he slotted the ball with pace past the goalkeeper.”

Later in the half, Nolan was able to pounce on a loose ball in the Panther box, and put it past the keeper to make it 2-0 for the Tigers.

“He really showed his wares as an accomplished striker, and we hope that he keeps getting confidence in that,” Heiderscheid said.

The Tigers kept managing their ball possession very well in the second half of extra time, but a mistake on a back pass led to a goal for the Panthers in the final five minutes of the match.

“To O’Fallon’s credit, we were trying to manage the ball, and keep it in the wide areas,” Heiderscheid said, “but unfortunately, we played a ball back, O’Fallon took it, moved it forward well, and made it 2-1. Kudos to O’Fallon, they worked hard and got themselves back into the game, but we did a good job at the end of killing the game.”

Heiderscheid feels that the Panthers will be heard from this season.

“I think O’Fallon has the ability to be one of the top teams,” Heiderscheid said. “They have great young players, they’re well-coached, and I think they’re going to get better and better all season.”

The Tigers are now 3-1-0 on the season, 1-0-0 in the Southwestern Conference, and host Belleville East on Thursday evening in a 7 p.m. kickoff. Edwardsville then travels to Belleville West Sept. 10, in a 7 p.m. kickoff, then is at Waterloo Gibault Catholic Sept. 12 in a 6:30 p.m. kickoff.

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