

Edwardsville Rallies From One Set Down, Wins Rivalry Volleyball Match Over O'Fallon 18-25, 25-22, 25-23

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – In what turned out to be one of the best matches of the season, Edwardsville High's girls volleyball team came from being one set down to take a dramatic 18-25, 25-22, 25-23 win over rival O'Fallon in a Southwestern Conference match played Tuesday evening before a raucous crowd at Lucco-Jackson Gym.

The Tigers swept the season series with the Panthers, having won at the Panther Dome in three sets on Sept. 3, and Tuesday's match was one of the best of the season thus far, a tight, up-and-down affair all the way through. In other words, just another night in the Southwestern Conference.

"Right, it was definitely another night in the Southwestern Conference, all tough matches," said a smiling Edwardsville coach Lisa Orlet. "Especially O'Fallon. The rival is a good kind of rival, and both teams play each other strong, and I was very pleased with the way that our girls finished. We've been building on working their confidence and staying aggressive towards the end, and you saw Alexa (Harris) just pull that out, and I was really proud of her."

Every Tiger player on the floor contributed to the win, and Orlet was very pleased with the team's effort.

"And that's what we try to teach them," Orlet said, "that with all of this talent, we're blessed. We've got to keep spreading the ball, and keeping the other team on their toes, and everybody stays aggressive. I think, hopefully, they learned that tonight."

Orlet agreed that it was a great team win.

"Oh, yeah," Orlet said. "Very proud of the girls, for sure. Fought to the bitter end."

In fact, both sides played very well, and the match kept both supporters' sections on either side of the gym cheering until the final point.

"O'Fallon's defense was top-notch," Orlet said, "Taylor Guy brought it, and I think their libero (Kyla Ellis) had a wonderful match. I've got nothing but great things to say about them."

And after dropping the first set, the Tigers just kept working and plugging away, putting their mistakes behind them and played on, no matter what.

"We've been working really hard at practice," Orlet said, "so I think we're at a point where we try to get them to keep it fun and to trust themselves, let the mistakes go and

not let them build up too much. I think that they were able to turn it around real quick and have an error, let it go, get the next ball, and I was really proud of them for that, to bounce back.”

The biggest win of the season thus far for Edwardsville?

“Yeah, definitely,” Orlet said with a smile.

The two teams started the opening set by splitting the first 10 points, being tied at 5-5, and the pattern continued, with both teams trading points until 7-7, when the Panthers went off on the first extended run of the match, reeling off four straight points behind the play of Erionna Coleman, and a combined block from Coleman and Abbey Blue to take an 11-7 lead. A tip from Rihanna Huebner and a Harris kill cut the O’Fallon lead to 11-9, and the two teams exchanged points before the Panther were able to extend the lead to 15-11. Later on, with Kelsie Schieppe serving, O’Fallon extended the lead to 18-12, forcing an Edwardsville time out. The Tigers were able to cut into the lead to 18-14, but again, the Panthers extended their lead, this time to 22-15, the Tigers calling time out again. A kill by Coleman and an error by Edwardsville made it set point at 24-15, but the Tigers rallied back from the deficit to score three points in a row to make it 24-18 before a Coleman kill ended the opening set in favor of the Panthers 25-18.

The second set started out evenly, but the Tigers went on a run, scoring four straight points with Lexie Curtis leading the way with a combined tip with Storm Suhre, and a pair of kills to make it 6-2 Edwardsville. O’Fallon scored the next two points before the sides exchanged points to make it 7-5. The Panthers were able to draw level at 7-7 before another exchange brought the score to 10-10. With Huebner serving, a Panther violation and kills from Harris and Gabby Saye gave Edwardsville a 14-10 lead, causing O’Fallon to call time. The Tigers then extended the advantage to 19-13 behind a pair of Maddie Isringhausen kills, and after another O’Fallon time out, the Panthers rallied to make it 21-17. The Tigers then made the score 24-19 behind a brilliant tip from Saye and hitting error from the Panthers. O’Fallon rallied to make it 24-22 before a Suhre tip got it to give the Tigers a 25-22 win, forcing a third and deciding set.

And the final set started off with the two teams exchanging points and playing very well, with the Panthers going out to a 10-8 lead before the Tigers tied it back up. Another exchange brought the score to 11-11 before a violation and an error gave the Panthers a 13-11 lead, with the Tigers calling time out to regroup. Edwardsville came back to tie the set at 14-14, and the two teams again exchanged points to make it 15-15. O’Fallon, with Ellis serving, got a kill from Coleman and a combined block from Coleman and Blue to give the Panthers a 19-15 lead, forcing the final Edwardsville time out. The Tigers rallied behind a kill from Isringhausen and an error to cut the lead to 19-18, with O’Fallon calling time. The Panthers then extended its lead to 21-18 with a Blue

kill, but the Tigers rallied again, with Isringhausen serving. Harris tied the match with a spectacular kill to make it 21-21, then took the lead on a save by Isringhausen that found its way home to make it 22-21. Huebner made it 23-21, and it became 24-22 for the Tigers before a violation gave the ball back to O'Fallon. Harris then slammed home the winner to make the final 25-23, sending the Tiger faithful wild with delight.

Isringhausen led the Tigers with 12 kills, while Saye had 11 and Harris seven. Emma Garner had 22 digs, while Morgan Tulacro and Harris had 10, Suhre had three blocks, Tulacro 18 assists, and both Isringhausen and Harris seven points.

The Tigers are now 15-2 on the season, 7-0 in the SWC, and go on the road to play Cor Jesu Academy, the top-ranked large school in the St. Louis area, Wednesday in what's expected to be another blockbuster match, then host Belleville Althoff Catholic at home next Tuesday and travel to Alton Oct. 10 before playing in a tournament in Chicagoland the weekend of Oct. 12-13. And Orlet is very proud of her team's effort against O'Fallon.

"Just a fun night, very proud of both teams, and it was great volleyball," Orlet said.





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