

Nolan's Hat Trick Helps Give Tigers 5-0 Southwestern Conference Win Over Belleville West

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – Cooper Nolan recorded a hat trick, while Alan Ebert and Andrew Mills also had goals as Edwardsville recorded a 5-0 Southwestern Conference win over Belleville West Thursday evening at Tiger Stadium.

The Tigers had their annual Senior Night ceremonies before the game, where the Class of 2020 – Shane Greathouse, Kadin Lieberman, Ebert, J.T. Watson, Kurt Wright, Nolan, Jakob Doyle, Tony Agwuedu, Ben and Logan Loftus, Ashton Kaufmann, Collin Gerber, Peyton Hauk, John Matthews, Adam Sneed, Gabe Noll and Tyler Frolik – and their families were honored for their contributions to the program. And then, Edwardsville went out and played an exceptional game against a Maroon side that also played well.

“If you really look at all aspects, West was moving the ball with energy, and at times, I thought they were effective in their movement,” said Edwardsville head coach Mark Heiderscheid. “But we just limited most of their chances, so it was a very well-deserved clean sheet.”

The Tigers themselves dominated the possession and played with purpose and confidence.

“We did great,” Heiderscheid said. “I thought our ball movement was very exquisite, we were composed, and I thought we created very decent opportunities. Honestly, I thought that from the outset, we nearly got a couple of goals, we controlled the game, and we just, honestly, we were very effective in our attack. There wasn’t much to say, except we just enjoyed watching how the kids were playing.”

The Tigers had three good chances in the opening five minutes, especially on a very cheeky backheel pass from Nolan that sprung a teammate, but West goalie Daniel Richardson was there to make the stops. Nolan himself had a great chance in the 11th minute when he stole the ball from a Maroon player, broke in and put a nice shot in that was parried away by Richardson.

The Tigers broke through in the 16th minute when Nolan took a great pass along the ground and slotted it home to give Edwardsville a 1-0 lead. Five minutes later, in the 21st minute off a corner, the cross found the head of Andrew Mills, who passed it to Ebert, who headed it home over the outstretched Richardson to make it 2-0.

Agwuedu had a glorious opportunity in the 27th minute but was cut off by the Maroon defense before he could get a shot off, and in the 31st minute, West had its first real opportunity, but a foul nullified the chance. In the 39th minute, a Maroon shot from distance had a chance, but Noll tipped the ball over the bar as the siren went to end the first half, the Tigers in the lead at 2-0.

Edwardsville got an early second-half goal off of a mix-up in the box, when a clearing attempt deflected off the chest of a Maroon defender, and Nolan was there to put the ball in the back of the net in the 42nd minute to give the Tigers a 3-0 lead. Nolan was also booked after the goal.

West had a chance in the 49th minute when a shot from distance was knocked away by Frolik, who had entered the game after halftime, and nothing came from the ensuing Maroon corner. In the 58th minute, Logan Loftus made a beautiful run and made a great crossing pass, but Snead’s header went over the top to keep it 3-0.

Two minutes later, off of a free-kick, Wright put a great ball into the box that Brennan Weller was able to put straight into the back of the net to give Edwardsville a 4-0 lead. The final goal came two minutes from full time, when Nolan completed his hat trick off a great through ball from Doyle, broke in and put the shot into the lower left-hand corner to make the final 5-0 for the Tigers.

Earlier in the day, it was announced that the Tigers earned the top seed for the upcoming IHSA Class 3A regional that feeds into the Normal Community sectional, and Heiderscheid felt that his side had earned the seed with great play.

“At this point, I think that once we beat O’Fallon twice, it was pretty much confirmed the number one seed,” Heiderscheid said, “and we had wrapped up the conference, so it was pretty much guaranteed that we would get the number one seed. I think that It shows how well the boys have performed in the last few weeks.”

The Tigers are now 15-3-0 overall on the year and have two conference games remaining, next Tuesday at home against Alton, and next Thursday at Collinsville, before ending the regular season at home Oct. 12 against CBC. Heiderscheid has a very simple goal for his team going into the final stretch before the playoffs.

“I think now, it’s just trying to continue to get better,” Heiderscheid said, “and be ready for the postseason.”



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