

Edwardsville Plays In Class 3A Soccer Super-Sectional Match Tonight, Tigers Face Big Challenge From Lincoln-Way West

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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BRADLEY - The Edwardsville High boys soccer team has a great chance to advance to their first IHSA Class 3A state finals since 2013 when the Tigers meet up with New Lenox Lincoln-Way West in the Bradley-Bourbonnais super-sectional match, which

will be played tonight at 6:30 p.m. at Bradley-Bourbonnais High School in far southwest suburban Chicago.

The Tigers are currently 20-4-1 on the season, and advanced with a dramatic 3-2 win over Moline on Friday evening in the final of the Normal Community West sectional, while the Warriors defeated Chicago Marist 3-2 in the final of the Frankfort Lincoln-Way East sectional on Saturday morning.

Edwardsville head coach Mark Heiderscheid feels his team will be going into the match in a very positive state of mind.

"I think the kids are going pretty positive at this point," Heiderscheid said. "We've had our share of goals, and we've also had our grinder games. I think, honestly, that it's been a thing where we've had a variety of games, where it's been very educational, and I think it goes to prepare us as a team for the super-sectional."

The Tigers won the sectional final on Friday on a goal at the death by junior striker Brennan Weller, who, along with his teammates, were definitely in dreamland when the ball went into the net.

"He's a very gifted student, so he's a smart kid," Heiderscheid said of Weller, "but he's also very grounded. so he's the kind of kid that takes things in stride."

One of the keys to the match will be the Tigers' defense, which has played very well all season, and has come together at the right time, having only conceded six goals throughout the campaign.

"I think our defensive core has done very well in the playoffs," Heiderscheid said, "and through the whole season."

The team scoring has also been very good, with 72 goals being spread out throughout the side. Three players - Cooper Nolan, with 19 goals, Weller, with 14, and Jakob Doyle, with 11 - have scored in double figures in goals thus far, and all three will be dangerous near the Warrior net.

Heiderscheid feels that his side has a big chance to move on, and looks forward to the challenge.

"I think that tomorrow, we have a great opportunity," Heiderscheid said, "and I think we're a very capable team."

It won't be easy against Lincoln-Way West, a very well-organized defensive team that gives space very grudgingly.

"I think their organization was very impressive," Heiderscheid said, "they're a team that's tactically sound, and their defense is going to be tough to crack. They get a lot of numbers behind the ball, they're a good counterattacking team, and they've been effective on set pieces. So even if we make the most of our possession, they could still counter and score. We'll need to be on our toes for that."

The most important factor to the match will be how well the Tigers can finish their opportunities, and put the ball in the back of the net.

"At this point, it's about finishing opportunities," Heiderscheid said. "If we can do that, we'll be fine."

The Tigers-Warriors winner advances to the state finals on Friday and Saturday at Hoffman Estates High School in northwest suburban Chicago, playing in the semifinals against the winner of the Hoffman Estates Conant super-sectional, either Algonquin Jacobs or West Chicago, on Friday evening at 5 p.m. The final is set for Saturday night at 7 p.m.