



Nolan Scores Winner In 72nd Minute As Tigers Defeat 10-Man Lincoln-Way West 3-2, Head To Class 3A State Finals

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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BRADLEY - Cooper Nolan scored off a great feed from Jakob Doyle in the 72nd minute to give the Edwardsville boys soccer team a 3-2 win over New Lenox Lincoln-Way West in the IHSA Class 3A super-sectional match Tuesday evening at Bradley-Bourbonnais High School in far southwest suburban Chicago.

It was Nolan's team-leading 20th goal of the season, and it capped off an up-and-down match which saw the Tigers advance to this weekend's state finals for the first time since 2013 when Edwardsville won its second championship.

Brennan Weller had a brace (two goals), both of which gave the Tigers a 1-0 and 2-1 lead in the first half before the Warriors drew level twice. Before Nolan's match-winner, West was reduced to 10 men after one of their players was sent off after a second yellow card.

"This was definitely a crazy one, probably more so than the last one," said Edwardsville coach Mark Heiderscheid. Weller scores, and it looks like we're in for a good victory. Then they tie it up, and it's good feeling gone," he said with a laugh. "Then Weller scores again, and then, all of a sudden, we're in a good spot, but then we got kind of got one between the keeper and the defense, and it was an unfortunate goal deep in the second half. They went right down the field, we had an unfortunate error, and it's tied 2-2."

But Doyle started the play that rescued the win for Edwardsville, getting a great ball in towards the Warrior goal, where Nolan beat the keeper and both calmly and clinically put the ball into the net to put the Tigers into the state tournament.

"It was a great ball," Heiderscheid said. "Doyle angled the ball to put it into the right spot, Cooper gets the ball and has the keeper beat, but has the composure to put the ball in at game speed."

Weller got his first of the night in the 13th minute, but the Warriors drew level just right before 20 minutes. Weller put the Tigers back up in the 31st minute off a rebound to give Edwardsville a 2-1 lead at halftime.

Cody Collin drew Lincoln-Way West back onto level terms with a goal just past the hour, but Nolan came up with his clutch goal in the 72nd minute to give the Tigers the win.

There were quite a lot of anxious moments throughout the match, but Heiderscheid is very happy that the Tigers are heading back to the state tournament.

"Oh my gosh, yes, I'm just kind of elated," Heiderscheid said, "but every game, you want to win. I think that was one of the most anxious moments to get to the state semifinals. Now we'll try our best, and see what happens."

That semifinal match takes place Friday evening, when the now 21-4-1 Tigers face West Chicago, who won the Hoffman Estates Conant super-sectional 2-0 over Algonquin Jacobs, at Hoffman Estates High School in northwest suburban Chicago in a 5 p.m. kickoff. A win puts Edwardsville in the final on Saturday night against the winner of the second semifinal, either Chicago St. Patrick or Berwyn-Cicero Morton, which kicks off at 7 p.m.