

# **Minooka Takes Control in Second Half, Defeats Edwardsville 34-17 to Advance to Class 8A Quarterfinals**

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**MINOOKA** - Minooka, the top-seeded team in the IHSA Class 8A football playoffs, scored on its first possession of the second half, then took advantage of an interception on the next Edwardsville possession to score on a 13-yard pass play late in the third in

going on to a 34-17 win over the Tigers in their second-round game late Saturday afternoon at Minooka.

The Tigers held a 17-14 lead at halftime, rolling up 213 yards in offense, but were held to 70 yards total in the second half, turning the ball over twice as the Indians took over the game in going on to the win.

Edwardsville did have a first-half lead, as Ryan Hampton threw twice to Justin Johnson, Jr. for touchdowns from 17 and 22 yards out respectively, and Chase Parker added a 24-yard field goal to help give the Tigers their halftime lead. For the game, Johnson was held to 63 yards on 14 attempts, while Hampton was nine-of-16 passing for 144 yards, two touchdowns and two interceptions.

The Tigers put points on the board all three times they had the ball in the first half, putting together an impressive 15-play, 71-yard drive that took 8:10 off the clock that led to one of their scores. The Indians got touchdown runs of 24 and three yards from Noah Ellens as the Tigers took their lead into the locker room at halftime.

Minooka forced an Edwardsville three-and-out to start the second half, then put together a nine-play drive that resulted in a one-yard run from quarterback Seth Lehr for the touchdown that put the Indians ahead for good at 20-17, with Jacob Morrissey blocking the convert. The game's turning point occurred on the second play of Edwardsville's next possession when Ernesto Ramirez intercepted a Hampton pass and returned it to the Tiger 11. Three plays later, with the Indians facing a third-and-12, Lehr hit Michael Zito with a screen pass for 13 yards and a critical touchdown making it 27-17 with 3:23 to go in the third.

In the fourth quarter, another Indian interception was returned for a touchdown to make the 34-17 final.

Lehr was 11-of-12 passing for 104 yards and the one touchdown for Minooka.

The Indians improve to 11-0 and move on to the quarterfinals, where they will play Chicago Brother Rice Catholic, a 25-7 winner over South Elgin, next weekend, with the date, time and site to be announced by the IHSA office on Monday. The Tigers end their season with an 8-3 mark.