

Edwardsville Scores Twice On Power Play In Third Period, Defeats Oakville 6-4 In Annual New Year's Night Game

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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EAST ALTON - Will Schuster and Sam Gibbons scored power-play goals in a very roughly-played third period as Edwardsville won its annual New Year's Night game, defeating Oakville 6-4 Wednesday evening at the East Alton Ice Arena.

Edwardsville took advantage of Oakville penalties in a very physical game that saw both teams combine for 52 minutes in penalties in the third period and Edwardsville lose Collin Salter to a game misconduct late in the game. Edwardsville kept its cool under pressure to score the power-play goals that decided the game.

"Yeah, good game all around for our guys," said Edwardsville coach Jason Walker, "especially at the end. That's what good teams do; we were able to stay out of the penalty trouble, control our emotions and the boys did a good job tonight. It was a very, very big win for us. Good way to start off the new year."

The Tigers won their second straight game after undergoing a slump where Edwardsville won-lost three of four games and tied another in the last minute. It was indeed an important two points to pick up on the night.

"Yeah, I mean, that's the thing," Walker said. "You're going to have your ups and downs during the season, you're going to have your adversity. That's how you come out of it that determines how successful you are. These guys got a great attitude, they've got a

good, hard work ethic, and it showed tonight. They came out, they were ready to play tonight against a good Oakville team."

And again, Edwardsville held its cool together in the third period when everything started getting physical and took advantage of its power play to eventually win the game.

"Like I said, that's obviously the key to the game," Walker said. "It was virtually an even game going into that stretch when there's quite a few penalties. The guys held their emotions; Oakville's a good team, they're a physical team, and for them to come out of it the way they did, it was a very, very good game."

It was indeed a very evenly-played game for the first two periods, both sides having an equal number of chances, and getting good shots away. It was Oakville who scored first, at 4:33 of the first, when Zack Daniels took a pass from Mason Christopher and put the puck past Edwardsville goalie Jonas Akeman to give Oakville a 1-0 lead. Daniels struck again at 8:39, when off a scramble in front of goal, poked the puck into the net for an unassisted goal that doubled Oakville's lead to 2-0.

Edwardsville struck twice in 37 seconds to tie the game up. First, Gabe Noll got a good feed in front from Nate Frey to score at 9:14 to cut the lead to 2-1, with Mattie Norton also getting an assist on the play. Then at 9:51, Cam Gillen got a good wrist shot past Oakville goalie Chase Christopher, with an assist going to Aiden Stevens, to tie the game 2-2 after one period.

Edwardsville took its first lead at 2:15 of the second period when Mark Tucker beat Christopher with a good shot from the right side after getting a feed from Schuster to put Edwardsville up 3-2. Oakville answered back at 6:31 when, with Cam Gillen off for slashing, Justin Skaggs scored off another scramble in front, with Christopher again assisting, to tie the game at 3-3. Oakville then took the lead again at 8:49 on a goal from Oliver Right, assisted by Adam and Travis Herrick to make it 4-3 for Oakville. But Edwardsville wasn't quite done yet, and at 14:26, Mark Tucker skated in after taking Salter's lead pass, and beat Chase Christopher with a wrister to tie the game 4-4 at the end of the second period.

At the start of the third period, after a late second-period scrum that saw Oakville get the extra minor for cross-checking against Jacob Sisson, Schuster scored off a rebound unassisted at 1:45 to give Edwardsville the lead at 5-4. It was after that game started getting chippy, with both teams being called for penalties, including majors against teams. Salter was ejected when he was called for a major for checking from behind at 8:31, which carries an automatic game misconduct. Edwardsville did keep its collective

cool together, and at 13:20, with Daniels off for roughing and the clock cut to two minutes to play due to ice time constraints, Gibbons took a pass in front from Schuster and scored to clinch the 6-4 win for Edwardsville.

For the game, Edwardsville outshot Oakville 25-19.

Edwardsville improves to 10-5-2 on the season with their second consecutive win following a 2-0 win Dec. 30 against Imperial, Mo., Seckman, and hosts Parkway South Thursday night at East Alton in their regular 8:45 p.m. start. With the new year now underway, Walker knows what it'll take for Edwardsville to take another two points.

"We've just got to keep it going," Walker said. "We want to keep this momentum going, and make sure we're doing the little things correct, and just building off this win."

And both Walker and his team have big plans ahead for the 2020 portion of the season.

"We're hoping from here on out, it's our most exciting hockey of the year," Walker said.