

Preston Weaver Plays Key Role for Tigers Off Bench

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - Edwardsville boys basketball junior forward Preston Weaver played a key role for the Tigers off the bench, hitting a three-pointer in the team's 54-32 win over Quincy in the IHSA Class 4A regional semifinal on Mar. 3 at Lucco-Jackson Gym.

And on the final regular-season game on Feb. 28, it was Weaver who hit a pair of clutch threes in the fourth quarter that helped Edwardsville defeat Belleville East 48-45. It was part of the said role off the bench that helped the Tigers win 13 of their last 16 games, as Edwardsville finished with a 23-10 record. And against the Blue Devils, his three was a part of a dominant first half where Edwardsville went out to a 36-12 halftime lead.

"We knew what they were going to do," Weaver said in a postgame interview. "What we needed to do is go out there and play our game, be ready, and we did that."

Which was exactly what Edwardsville did, as everything clicked on all cylinders, Everything started in the Tigers' daily practice sessions, where the team worked on all possible situations and what the opposition does in order to prepare for the games.

"We prepare for every game the same," Weaver said. "We just want to go out there and practice hard, and be ready for the next one."

Weaver sees his role on the team as a shooter, but always gives his all for the team's success.

"I'd say I'm a shooter," Weaver said, "but I play hard, I give it my all; that's what everybody else on this team does. We all go out there and give it our all. And that's what makes this team so special."

The Tigers advanced to the regional final on Mar. 6, but lost to O'Fallon 48-42, the Panthers' third win of the season over Edwardsville. Going into the final, Weaver felt that if the Tigers played their game, they would win, and they were very highly motivated against O'Fallon.

"We just got to go out there, and play our game," Weaver said, "play good defense like always. We all want O'Fallon again, we want our revenge, but we're just going to go out there and play hard, and the game will take care of itself."

Moore was very proud of his team's efforts all season, and felt that Edwardsville had a chance to defeat O'Fallon to move on.

"We played them tight the last two games," Weaver said. "I think we've got a good chance. We're just going to go out there and play hard."