



# **Caty Happe Looks Forward To Something Special With Tigers' Girls Basketball Team**

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer  
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EDWARDSVILLE - New Edwardsville girls basketball coach Caty Happe got her first win on Saturday afternoon in 57-37 victory over Belleville West on Saturday afternoon

at Lucco-Jackson Gym, as Happe coached her first game for the Tigers, taking over for longtime coach Lori Blade, who retired following the 2019-20 season.

At 1 p.m. Saturday, Happe will coach her Edwardsville girls against Civic Memorial in a live broadcast on [Riverbender.com/Edglentoday.com](http://Riverbender.com/Edglentoday.com).

Happe, who played for Blade and was also an assistant coach as Caty Ponce, was very happy and excited to get the first win in her debut, but more importantly, seeing her team getting to play its opener after a long delay due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

"It's awesome to see the girls out there and play," Happe said in a postgame interview, "and obviously, get a win. So, glad to see people playing basketball again."

The Tigers and the rest of the Metro-East area got the green light to start the season on Thursday morning when Region Four, which includes Madison, St. Clair and Monroe Counties, were dropped to Phase Four mitigations, allowing the season to start. When the official word came down, Happe, her staff and her players were excited to get things going.

"We were super excited," Happe said. "I think it was just a matter of we were wondering if it was really going to happen. Those things change so fast to Thursday; we knew that we were playing, and I think it's just taking it one step at a time."

Now that Happe has her first game and win, she's feeling very glad and happy to get the initial victory.

"It's nice to get your first win," Happe said. "Hopefully, there's more to come, but we've got a lot of work to do."

Happe was appointed to be head coach this past summer, and her first reaction to her promotion was one of gratefulness and excitement.

"Just very grateful to have the job," Happe said, "to work with the kids I've been working with, and to really get an opportunity to do something special here."

Happe is a former player for and assistant coach to Blade, and both are very pleased with the opportunity.

"Oh, for sure," Happe said. "Obviously, I played for her, and helped out for the last couple of years, so it's good to see that some things won't change, and I've learned a lot from her, and I continue to learn every day."

Blade helped out on the sidelines Saturday as part of the game day crew, and Happe was very pleased to see her.

"Oh, it was good," Happe said with a smile. "I knew she was going to be here."

With the 2020-21 season being so abbreviated, Happe is taking the simple approach to team goals.

"Just to get better every day," Happe said. "I think we ought to take it one game at a time, and not look at it overall. I think people need to take into consideration that it's going to be a different year, and we haven't really played very much. So, it's going to be sloppy early on, and I expect us to start cleaning that up."

Just having the season has made everyone very grateful, and as seen on the Tigers' warm-up shirts in pregame, Happe summed it up very well.

"Exactly," Happe said. "You can't take anything for granted."



