

Harris Leads Tigers With 20 Points, Edwardsville Girls Eliminate Kahoks In SWC Tournament 68-29

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - Junior forward Sydney Harris led Edwardsville with 20 points as the Tigers had eight different players score in their 68-29 win over seventh-seeded Collinsville in the first quarterfinal of the Southwestern Conference girls postseason basketball tournament Thursday evening at Lucco-Jackson Gym.

Edwardsville went off to an 18-12 first quarter lead, and took charge late in the second quarter, outscoring the Kahoks in the second half 32-9 in the second half in advancing to the second semifinal at home on Friday evening.

Tigers' head coach Caty Happe knows that now it's the postseason, it's one game at a time, win and go on to play the next day.

"Yep, that's all that matters," Happe said. "So, getting to the next day, 0-0 record, now 1-0."

It was Edwardsville's first game since their regular season finale on Monday, and with the potential for three games in three days, including Saturday's final, it's important to get as many players involved in the game as possible.

"Super important," Happe said. "Rest is going to be huge, so between this game, tomorrow, and even Saturday at some point if we get there."

The Kahoks hung tough and stayed with the Tigers through much of the first half before Edwardsville went on a late second quarter run to help put things away.

"I thought we did a better job from the second half adjusting to that and moving forward. And it's all about in-game adjustments now," Happe said.

The Tigers' transition game played a big role in the second half as well.

"I thought Macy (Silvey) did an incredible job in the second half, finding kids, and I'm super proud of her, because really came back and did that in the second half. And that changed the game for us."

Without an IHSA state tournament series this season because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Tiger players are taking a great deal of pride in using the SWC tournament this year, with the possibility of winning a championship.

"It's a huge thing," Happe said. "I mean. obviously, there's no state title, so this is what we're playing for. So we're glad to have something, and we're excited to advance."

Elle Evans gave Edwardsville the first lead of the game with a basket, but a three from Astacia Bush gave Collinsville a 3-2 lead, with the teams exchanging baskets and free throws to put the Tigers up 6-5. A basket from Emerson Weller and a three from Katelynne Roberts put Edwardsville further ahead 11-5 before a three up top from freshman Ella Guerrero cut the Tiger lead to 11-8, The teams again exchanged baskets before Edwardsville got a basket from Silvey and free throws from Harris and Silvey to take a 20-12 lead after the first period.

The Tigers scored the first seven points of the second quarter, getting a three from Harris and another Harris basket, along with a basket from Roberts to make it 27-12. A three from Riley Doyle and a pair of free throws from Megan Janson, along with a three from Sanaa Harris brought the Kahoks back to within 30-20, but back-to-back threes from Evans and Harris gave Edwardsville a 36-20 lead at the interval.

A free throw and a three from Bush, sandwiched in between a basket from Evans, made the score 38-24 for Edwardsville at the start of the second half, but from there, the Tigers went on an 11-1 run, getting baskets from Weller, Harris, Silvey and Ella Cook along the way to make it 49-25 at the end of the third quarter.

Edwardsville started the fourth quarter with an 8-2 run, getting a basket from Weller, and threes from Evans and Harris to put the Tigers out in front 57-27, triggering the fourth quarter running clock rule. The Tigers went on to outscore Collinsville 11-2 in the remainder of the period to take the 68-29 win to advance.

Besides Harris, Evans had 14 points for the Tigers, with both Weller and Silvey having seven points each, Kaitlyn Morningstar, Roberts and Ariana Bennett scoring four points each and Gwen Anderson, Ashlyn Hauk and Cook all scoring two points each. Both Janson and Bush led Collinsville with seven points each, with Doyle having four points, Guerrero had three points, and Katie Bardwell, Orianna Givens, Ricki Merlak and Jenna Scheller all scoring two points apiece,

The Kahoks' season ends with a record of 4-13, while the Tigers are now 14-1, and advance to play third-seed Belleville West, who won at home over sixth-seeded Alton 70-34 in the second quarterfinal, with fourth seed Belleville East defeating fifth seed East St. Louis 49-43 in the third quarterfinal. The Lancers play top-seeded O'Fallon in the first semifinal on Friday evening, with the semifinal winners playing in the final at the remaining highest seed. Happe knows the game against West will be tough, but the Tigers will be set to go.

"No matter who it is, I expect it'll be scrappy tomorrow," Happe said, "and it to be a tough game."

Of course, Happe and the Tigers are very happy to be playing in a postseason tournament, and looks forward to the weekend.

"Exactly," Happe said. "It's awesome to have something to play for."

[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)