



Quarterback Ryan Hampton Has Big Game In Double OT Win, Is iCAN Clinic Male Athlete Of Month For Edwardsville High School

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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O'FALLON - For Edwardsville High School football quarterback Ryan Hampton, it was one of the biggest wins of his career.

Hampton had a big game in helping the Tigers pull out a 43-40 win over O'Fallon in double overtime Friday night at OTHS Panther Stadium. Edwardsville won it on a two-yard touchdown run in the second overtime by Justin Johnson, Jr., setting off an incredible celebration on the Edwardsville sidelines and stands.

Hampton is the iCAN Clinic Male Athlete of the Month for Edwardsville High School.

Hampton was quick to praise his teammates for the win during his post-game interview.

"I think we could have executed some things better," Hampton said, "but I think our defense really held us in that game, as well as our offensive line, and of course, Justin (Johnson, Jr.). The O-line had some great holes, and Justin made some four-star plays. I'm just blessed to have these guys on my team."

Hampton has a shoulder injury aggravated on a hit in the third quarter, and came out for a brief period, but on the next possession, was right back in there, an indication of how truly tough a player he is.

"I have an AC sprain on my throwing shoulder, it happened in the second quarter against Belleville West last week," Hampton said. "Just I got hit late, hoping they would throw a flag, I was a little mad about that. They hit me in the shoulder, same shoulder, and I had to just come off and get some warm-up throws, take some Advil and get right back in there."

Defensive back Gabe James, playing on the corner for the first time ever, made the night's key play, stripping the Panther quarterback of the ball and recovering the fumble with less than five minutes left in regulation. The Tigers on the ensuing drive came back and scored the touchdown and two-point conversion to tie the game 30-30.

"I already talked to Gabe," Hampton said. "Of course, we have Justin; he played great as he always does. But I talked to Gabe; he might have been an MVP in that game. He had that long catch (of 70 yards in the third quarter), and that strip was the biggest play in the game, in my opinion. He just played great for a young guy to step up, especially at corner. He hasn't played a game at corner this entire year, so I appreciate him stepping up."

The Tigers and Flyers will play for the second time in the season finale at Clyde C. Jordan Stadium this coming weekend, with East Side having won in week three 52-21 at Tiger Stadium. Hampton is eager to have another chance against the Flyers.

"I do. I really do," Hampton said. "I got unlucky and injured early. I think we would have had a shot at them. We missed some opportunities while I was in as well. I think if we perfect everything, I think - I know we can beat these guys."

The game went into overtime O'Fallon's kicker missed a 29-yard field goal on the last play of regulation to force overtime after an Edwardsville time out to ice the kicker. Hampton had much going through his mind going into overtime.

"Oh, man, that was great," Hampton said. "I've got to shout out coach (Matt) Martin here, great coaching call to call a time out and ice the kicker. That kicker's a really good kicker; he just happened to miss it, and we took advantage of that."

When Johnson crossed the goal line with the winning touchdown, Hampton felt very good about everything as well.

"I feel amazing, man," Hampton said with a smile. "I mean, O'Fallon's a great team, they beat East St. Louis, we lost to East St. Louis, so they're a great team. It felt really good to beat them."

And Hampton will be ready for the rematch against the Flyers to end the shortened season.

"Yes, sir, I'm ready," Hampton said.