



Iffrig Hits Two Grand Slams, Drives In Eight As Tigers Win Over SLUH 14-8, Funkhouser Hits Home Run In Win Over O'Fallon

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - Sophomore infielder-outfielder Riley Iffrig had the day of a lifetime at the plate, hitting two grand slam homers and driving in eight runs as Edwardsville won over St. Louis U. High 14-8 in the third game of a cluster Saturday afternoon at Tom Pile Field.

Earlier in the day, Evan Funkhouser hit a home run as a part of a two hit, four RBI game as the Tigers defeated O'Fallon 8-4 in the first game.

The spotlight in the second win was on Iffrig, and Tigers' head coach Tim Funkhouser was very happy how Iffrig swung his bat, along with some other key hits in the game.

"In that first at-bat, I mean, with the bases loaded, they had struggled throwing strikes at the beginning," Funkhouser said, "but same token, earlier, we had zero runs scored, and by the time he came to the plate, we had once. He put a good swing on it; Riley's a good hitter, and he hasn't synched up his swing consistently this year. I think he had a three-for-three day where he had three misses against DeSmet, then he showed flashes other times. But it was really fun, it was huge for this game, and the second grand slam later. It was big again, where we had an early big lead and we were able to runs back on the board and added to it with the (Zak) Zoelzer ball off the wall too; that was important."

Funkhouser was very impressed with how Iffrig was locked in on his hitting.

"We've had some guys who've put on some good performances," Funkhouser said. "but from the standpoint of him being a sophomore, and being where he's been, he's been in our lineup every day, and yesterday, we just worked some different guys through, so he was a guy that didn't get a bat, I believe at all. For him to come back and put a good swing on it, he's been real productive for us at first base, and glad he's on our team."

The Tigers were able to get a run across without swinging a bat in the first, as Hayden Moore, Grant Huebner and Spencer Stearns all drew walks to load the bases, and another walk to Ty Berumen forced home Moore with the first run. One out later, Iffrig drilled a 1-1 pitch over the right field fence for his first grand slam of the day to give the Tigers a 5-0 lead.

The Junior Billikens countered with four runs in the second, starting with singles by Andrew Loeffelman, Tucker Thomas and John Loretta to fill the bases. Andrew Saharian singled to drive in a pair of runs, and put a runner of third. A ground out by Tommy Etling scored another run, and an RBI single by Jake Noonan cut the Edwardsville lead to 5-4 before a force play at second ended the inning.

Funkhouser led off the Tigers' third with a single, went to third on an error on a bad throw to second on a Iffrig grounder, and scored when Iffrig was thrown out trying to

steal second, making the score 6-4. In the top of the fifth, Loeffelman hit a two-run homer over the center field fence to tie the game 6-6, scoring Alex Shelton ahead of Loeffelman, but the Tigers scored seven times in the bottom of the inning to break the game open. Stearns and Berumen were hit by pitches to start things off, and a walk to Funkhouser loaded the bases. Iffrig unloaded on a 1-2 pitch that cleared the right field fence in nearly the same spot as his first grand slam to make the score 10-6. The inning continued on with walks to Kyle Modrusic and Adam Powell, then a Zoelzer double off the fence in left center scored Modrusic and sent Powell to third. A ground out by Moore and a sacrifice fly to right by Huebner scored two more runs and made it 13-6 after five.

SLUH scored twice in the top of the sixth, all with two out. Henry Zenor and Etling drew walks, then went to second and third on a passed ball. A walk to Noonan loaded the bases, where a Tyler Ridgeway single scored two runs to make it 13-8. Another walk loaded the bases, but the Junior Billikens couldn't score. In the bottom of the inning, a bases loaded ground out by Adam Powell scored the final run in the 14-8 win.

Earlier in the day, the Tigers were able to get the conference win over O'Fallon, going ahead to stay with a three run third, then holding off the Panthers to get the win.

"I thought it was a good victory for us," Funkhouser said. "It put us at 4-0 in the conference, and I thought O'Fallon's pitcher did a real good job against us. And they battled at the plate. Evan was able to settle in after the first inning after they plated two runs early, and they made it tougher, springing around some hits. Fortunately, we were able to get enough runs, and Spencer Stearns did a great job of closing that game. He had thrown a couple of times for us this year, I think up at Normal about two weeks ago. But he's going to be a big integral part to our relief pitching or spot starting, because he's got some good stuff, and he was really locked in today."

Outside of Funkhouser's day at the plate, both Moore and Stearns had a pair of hits, Powell had a hit, Huebner had two RBIs and Hardy drove home another run. Will Millard had two hits and a RBI for O'Fallon, while Garrett Meyer also had a pair of hits and Ethan Crouse, Danny Mack and Corey Quintal also had hits.

Funkhouser gave up four runs on six hits in five innings on the mound, walking four and striking out nine, while Stearns fanned four in his two innings of work. Brandon Haake struck out five for the Panthers, while Quintal fanned three.

The Tigers are now 12-3 on the year, and host Wentzville, Mo., Liberty Monday afternoon in a 4:30 p.m. start, then play three in a row on the road, going to Triad on

Tuesday, Francis Howell of Weldon Spring, Mo. on Wednesday and Jersey on Friday, coming back home to play Collinsville next Saturday morning at 10 a.m., then playing at Collinsville later that day in a 4:30 p.m. start.

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