

Stauffer Pushes Triad Past Edwardsville 3-0 In Metro Cup Girls Soccer Match At Tiger Stadium

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - Savannah Stauffer's spectacular goal off a free kick after 20 minutes helped spark Triad, who also got goals from Gracie Giacoletto from the penalty spot and from Brynn Presley early in the second half to go on to a 3-0 win over Edwardsville in the Metro Cup showcase tournament Wednesday evening at Tiger Stadium.

In the matchup between two of the better programs in Metro-East, indeed in the St. Louis area, the Knights had the better of the play throughout much of the match, limiting the Tigers' chances throughout. Edwardsville kept battling the entire 80 minutes, but couldn't put the ball in the back of the net.

"They're a fantastic team," said Tigers head coach Abby Federmann, "they have a strategy with pushing everybody forward and able to bring everybody back defensively. Their work ethic and conditioning showed up, we were slow to adjust, we were slow to react and led to a couple of silly fouls, which put us down 2-0."

Stauffer's goal off the free kick was a perfectly placed shot that was just over the outstretched arms of goalie Kaitlyn Naney into the net from about 40 yards out.

"Yeah, it was a good shot, it was off of a bad call," Federmann said. "Again, we were chasing, and it was off of a bad call. But it was a perfectly placed shot, there was nothing my keeper could have done."

It was the Tigers' first loss of the season, and Federmann is looking ahead to their final Metro Cup game this weekend, and will be concentrating on the Southwestern Conference matches going forward.

"We're looking forward to finishing up the Metro Cup on Saturday," Federmann said, "and then, our main focus is to win out in conference. So that's what we're going to look forward to."

The Knights played very enterprising and creative soccer throughout the match, and took advantage of the opportunities when they became available.

"We knew tonight was going to be one of those things where we're going to have to take care of the soccer ball," said Triad head coach Matt Bettlach, "because of how good they are. If we're not able to pass and move and do some of the things we like to do, and we lose it, they're just going to eat us up and transition us, and just get right on top of us, because they've got good players in the middle, they've got good players up top, and they can move the ball so quick. So our girls did a fantastic job of keeping possession tonight and moving the ball, and making them kind of chase us a little bit. But they were still coming after us, and our girls felt the pressure. But we did a great job of keeping possession tonight."

Stauffer's goalazo (spectacular goal) was a result of hard work in practice and her ability to launch a big kick from distance.

"You know, she's got a left foot," Bettlach said. "We work on it in practice, we talk about where we are on the field, when she can hit and when she can cross, because she's got that capability of putting it on goal from anywhere. She's got a heck of a left foot. There was not a question, I knew right away when that ball was placed --- I knew it was on the 30, but I said 'you're hitting,' because Savannah, she like a field goal kicker. She can hit the ball from 60 yards out. So that's what we were kind of thinking about, the sun was in the goalie's eyes, and the way Savannah can strike a ball, put it on frame. And anything happens."

Once the score became 3-0, the Knights' defense clamped down and protected the lead very well, not allowing many chances for the Tigers to score.

"Even though it was 3-0, they were still kind of coming at us," Bettlach said, "they didn't give up, they pushed up a little bit. But overall, I'm very happy with how we played

from the back, and moved the ball up. We locked it down defensively, and then, our midfielders did a great job of keeping the ball, and moving it, and doing the things we wanted to do. So it started in the back with our goalies, and then our defense just locking it down."

Both teams did have good chances in the opening 10 minutes, but they were swept away by both Naney and Triad goalie Reagan Chigas, after which the Knights started taking control of the match, getting some great chances, with Naney stopping a great chance in the 16th minute by Gabbie Wood.

Triad went ahead in the 20th minute, when on a free kick from 40 yards out after a foul was called against the Tigers, Stauffer got a signal to have a go, in which she hit a perfectly placed shot on goal that just eluded Naney and into the back of the net to give the Knights a 1-0 lead.

Edwardsville had a pair of opportunities to equalize, especially in the 28th minute, when Payton Federmann had a good shot, but the ball rolled right to Chigas for an easy save. The Knights kept pressing the play, having good build-ups, and were given a penalty kick in the 35th minute when a Triad player was brought down inside the box. Giacioletto stepped up and put the spot kick into the left side of the net past Naney to make it 2-0 Triad going into the interval.

Early in the second half, a Knights' corner was initially headed away by the Edwardsville defense, but the ball went right to Presley, who hit a shot from just outside the box that got over the goalie's arms into the net to give Triad a 3-0 lead. From then on, the Knights clamped down defensively, not giving the Tigers many opportunities. The best chance came in the 70th minute, when on a corner, a shot directly in front off the well-taken kick was stopped by Kendall Chigas to help preserve the Triad 3-0 win.

Naney had six saves in goal for the Tigers, while both Reagan and Kendall Chigas had three saves each to share the Triad clean sheet.

The Knights are now 9-0-1 on the year, and play at Alton Friday night in their final Cup match at Public School Stadium in a 5:30 p.m. kickoff. Triad will then face their Mississippi Valley Conference schedule the majority of their remaining season, and Bettlach is looking ahead to the challenge.

"Our conference is strong this year," Bettlach said, "so we've got some sturdy competition. But this Metro Cup is a great showcase for all these teams. I mean, there's been some great games in the first round, and in the second, we got to play against Edwardsville. I mean, it just doesn't stop, and that's why we play in this, because you want to see where you match up with everybody. So far, so good, but a long way to go."

The Tigers are now 5-1-0 on the year, and wind up Metro Cup play Saturday afternoon at Columbia in a 2 p.m. kickoff, then faces two Southwestern Conference matches on the road at Belleville West May 11 and at O'Fallon May 13. Federmann is looking ahead to the remainder of the conference slate, and knows there's many lessons to be learned from the team's first setback.

"Sure, absolutely," Federmann said. "There's always lessons to be learned."



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