



Edwardsville Scores Seven Times In Seventh To Win First Game, Then Score Six In Nightcap Of Sixth To Sweep Warriors In Twinbill

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - The Edwardsville High baseball team came from behind in the first game to tie things up in the top of the sixth, then scored seven runs in the top of the seventh, and climaxed the second game by scoring six runs in the bottom of the sixth to sweep Granite City in a doubleheader 8-1 and 16-6 Tuesday evening at Tom Pile Field.

The Tigers trailed most of the way in the opener when the Warriors scored in the third, then executed well and used timely hitting to tie the game in the sixth, and then scored seven runs in the top of the seventh to win the first game, then scored five times in the first of the second game, added three more in the fifth and closed the win out with six runs in the sixth to end the game early on the 10-run rule.

Granite pitcher Alex Wright had held Edwardsville in check until the sixth of the first game, and Tigers coach Tim Funkhouser gave him much credit for his efforts.

"Oh, I thought their pitcher did a great job," Funkhouser said. "He really competed well, and he was able to throw his pitches where he wanted to, and we didn't get many good swings on him, and he made it really tough. Fortunately, we were able to just keep fighting throughout the whole game and ended up prevailing in the end."

The Tigers were able to get good at-bats in the seventh inning of the opener, creating many opportunities that Edwardsville cashed in on.

"Yeah, we did," Funkhouser said. "We were able to stack some, and we used the bunt a little bit, and they gave us a few opportunities there too. But bottom line, we executed our bunts, and then, we had some big hits. I thought Adam Powell had a big two-strike hit to right, there. And (Spencer) Stearns was able to open it up with the ball down the line, plating two. And he was really good in relief. I thought all our pitchers did a great job."

It was another good overall performance for the Tigers in all aspects of the game.

"I was really impressed by our pitching," Funkhouser said. "Cam Grant had walked a guy, and then Mason Roehr is a great player. He put a swing on the ball, plating him, and other than that, we didn't have many blemishes on the pitching side. And from all those guys that came in late did outstanding."

Although the Warriors fell in the first game, the team kept battling and stayed with the Tigers throughout, a fact that Granite coach Scott Smallie was very happy with.

"Yeah, I mean, we're encouraged," Smallie said after the first game. "That's the team that's really good over there, and they compete for the state championships every year, and we came out and we were toe-to-toe with them, 1-1 until the end, and then, get a walk and a stolen base and a base hit. And then, they started hitting a little bit more. Our guy pitched a great game, and we had a couple of timely hits. It was a good baseball game."

The Warriors have played very well since the start of the season, and it starts with a good pitching staff that has played exceedingly well.

"Our pitching has definitely exceeded our expectations," Smallie said. "We've thrown the ball really well, and we've caught the ball well; not great today. And we've come up with a lot of timely hits. The top of our lineup's been in sync and hitting the ball, and it's been a fun year so far, that's for sure."

As with all the other teams and players in the state, Smallie feels very blessed and grateful to be playing the season after the 2020 season was cancelled because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, and has been somewhat limited because of the ongoing pandemic.

"Yeah, I mean we talk to our kids every day," Smallie said. "Don't take anything for granted, and we lost the season last year, and these kids know that, and they're fighting hard and enjoying themselves and getting to get outside and play a game that they've been playing for a really long time. So it's been good. Hats off to the IHSA and everybody that has given us this opportunity, for sure."

In the opener, Roher had one hit and drove in the Warriors run in the third to give them the 1-0 lead, with Mason McMurray, Wright, Aiden Tongay and Kile Ridenour also having hits in the first game. Alex Wright threw six-and-one-thirds innings on the mound, allowing four runs on five hits while walking one and striking out five for Granite.

Grant Huebner had three hits and two RBIs to help lead the Tigers, while Stearns had two hits and two RBIs, the two RBIs being with the key hit in the seventh inning that broke open the game, while Evan Funkhouser had two hits and a RBI, Ty Berumen had a hit and two RBIs, Caleb Copeland, Cole Funkhouser and Zak Zoelzer all had a hit and a RBI each and Powell, Cade Hardy and Kayden Jennings also drove in a run each.

Conrad Heppler, Carson Krapf, Hayden Moore and Stearns all had two strikeouts each on the mound, with Stearns getting the win.

In the nightcap, Roher had two hits and a RBI for the Warriors, while McMurray had two hits, Brady Smallie had a hit and both Tongay and Wright also drove in a run each. Owen McMichael and Brendan McKeachan both fanned two on the mound.

Huebner again led the way for the Tigers with three hits and two RBIs, Evan Funkhouser and Stearns had two hits and a RBI each, Berumen and Trent Schroeder both had a hit and two RBIs, Copeland, Cole Funkhouser and Zoelzer all had hits and RBIs, Kyle Modrusic had a hit and Jennings also drove in a run.

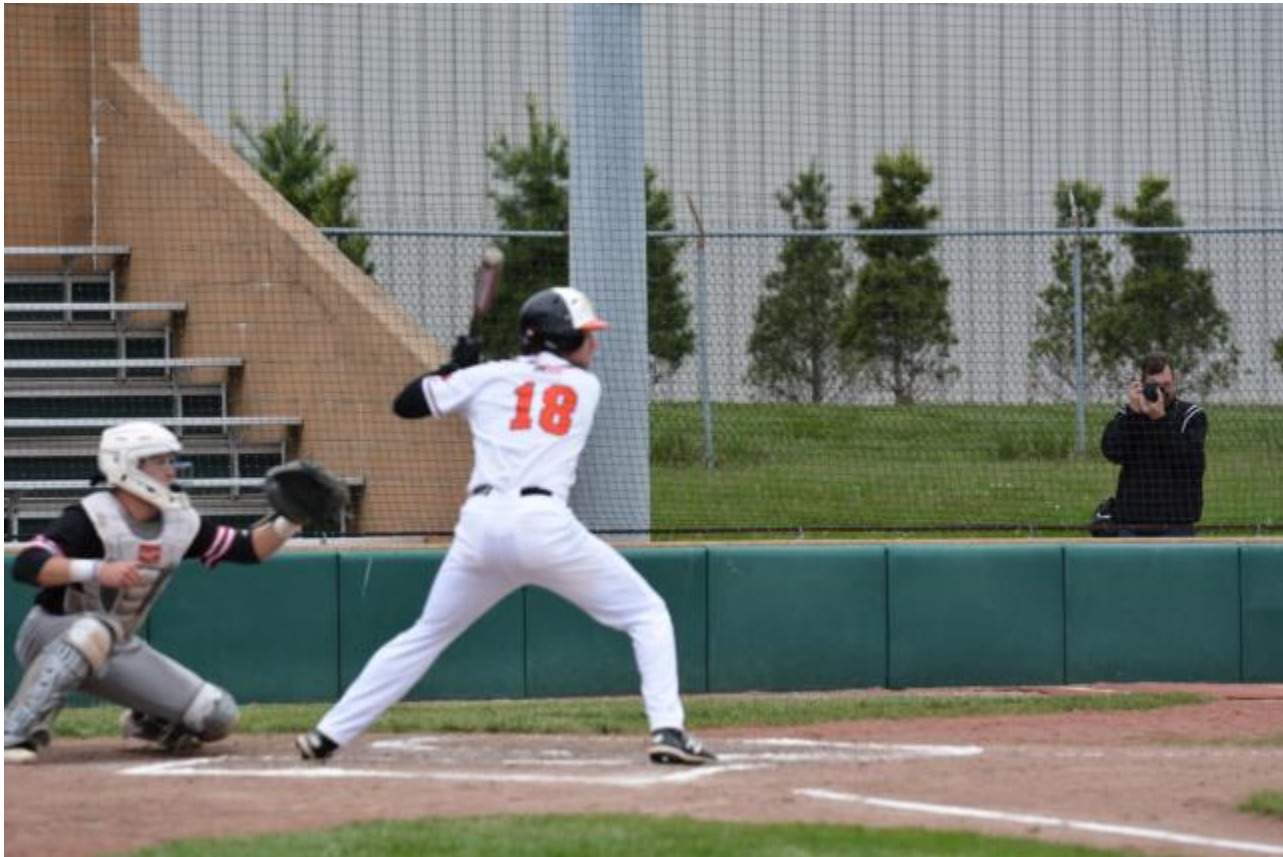
Heppler, Krapf, Moore and Mason Taylor all struck out two each on the mound, with Moore getting the win.

The Warriors are now 8-7 and host Breese Mater Dei Catholic on Wednesday at Babe Champion Field in a 4:30 p.m. start, then play at Belleville West Friday at 4:30 p.m. and at Triad Saturday at 2 p.m. Smallie is looking ahead to the remainder of the regular season and a possible postseason.

"Looking at scores and seeing what's going on, we're right there in the middle with everybody," Smallie said. "So, we've got about 12 games left and we'll see how it falls, and get to regionals, and hopefully, we can make some noise there for sure. We can't complain right now, we're 8-6 (going into the second game), and sitting here and above .500 record is always a good thing."

The Tigers are now 20-3 after the sweep, and host Alton Thursday in a 4:30 p.m. start, then go to Civic Memorial Friday in a 4:30 p.m. start and to Alton Saturday in a 10 a.m. start. Funkhouser is also looking ahead to the challenges.

"Well, we've got one game here in about 15 minutes," Funkhouser said before the second game against the Warriors, "so we'll be fresh after that and value that opportunity, and an opportunity to get better Wednesday in practice, and then back to the Southwestern Conference. So it's been a fun ride so far, but we're looking forward to each moment."





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