



Hamilton's Homer, Five RBIs, Five-Run Sixth Helps Belleville East Defeat Edwardsville 9-3 In Class 4A Softball Sectional Semifinal

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - Ava Hamilton had two hits, including a three-run homer in the sixth, and drove home five runs, while Taylor Sparks had four hits and two RBIs as Belleville East rallied from a 3-0 deficit to score five times in the sixth and twice more in the seventh in going on to a 9-3 win over Edwardsville in the IHSA Class 4A girls softball sectional semifinal Wednesday afternoon at the Edwardsville Sports Complex.

The Lancers advance to Friday's sectional final at Minooka, who defeated Pekin 7-6 on Tuesday.

The Tigers had taken a 3-0 lead in the first before East cut the lead to 3-2 in the top of the third. In the fifth, with the Tigers leading 3-2, Mariah May threw out a runner at the

plate with a perfect throw after a fly ball, and it turned out to be the biggest play of the game, as the Lancers came up with their five-run sixth to take the lead, and added two more in the seventh to take the win and advance.

Besides Sparks and Hamilton, Kylee Crowder had three hits for East, while Aileen Walker had two hits and Maddi Rodriguez also drove in a run.

Avery Hamilton had three hits for the Tigers, while Brooke Tolle had a hit and had the only RBI in the game for Edwardsville, while Lexi Gorniak, Ryleigh Owens and Tatum Van Ryswyk also had hits on the day.

Rylee Sroka went all the way in the circle for the Lancers, conceding five hits and three runs while walking only one and having no strikeouts. Hamilton struck out two for the Tigers, while Owens fanned one.

The Lancers are now 23-10 in advancing to Friday's sectional final, while the Tigers conclude their season 21-6.





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