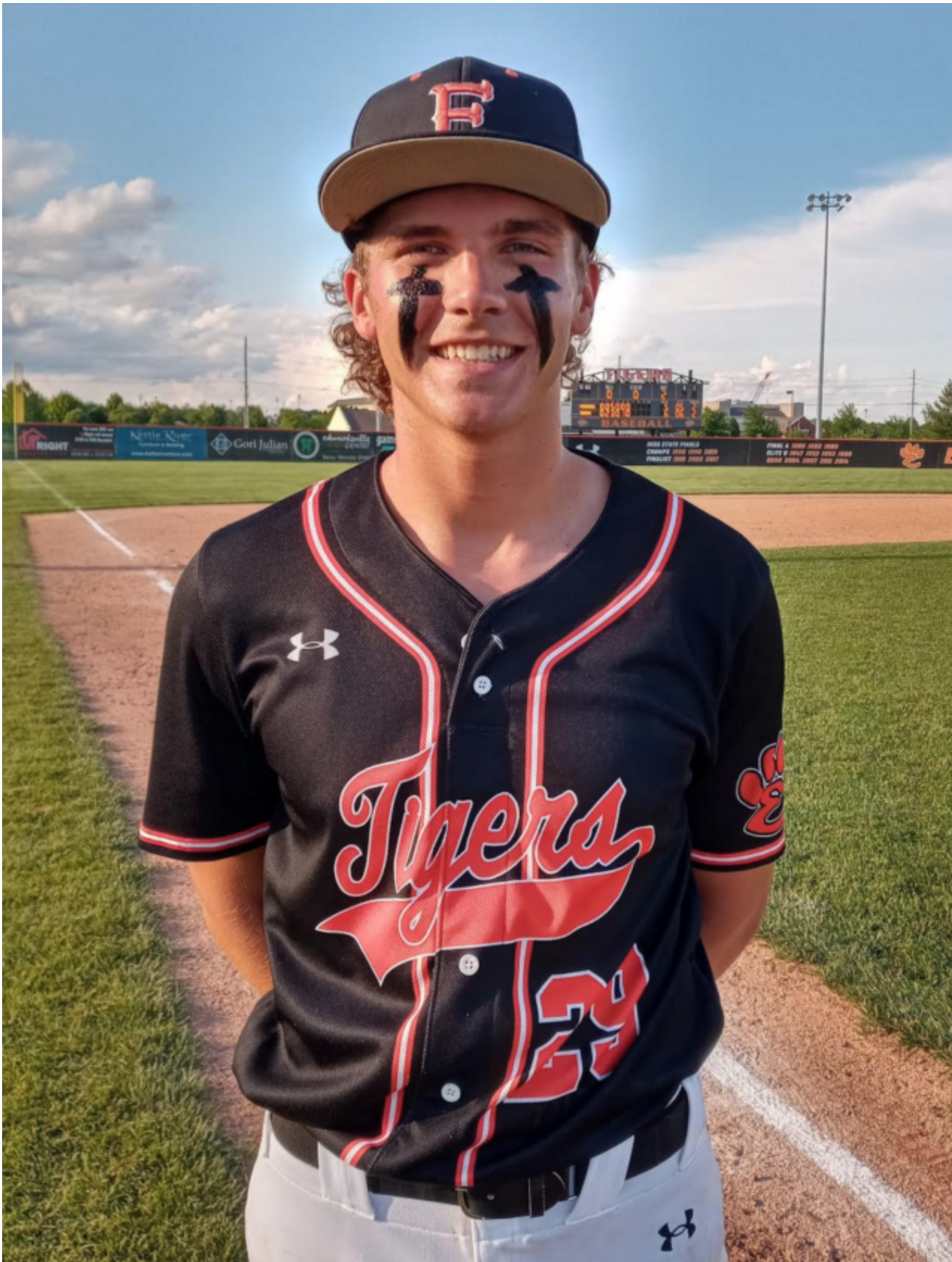




# Love Of The Game: Baseball Star Spencer Stearns is iCAN Clinic Male Athlete Of Month For EHS

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer  
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EDWARDSVILLE - Without a doubt, Edwardsville's Spencer Stearns has a love of the game of baseball. When Stearns steps on the field, he plays with visible enthusiasm and commitment to the sport.

Stearns had several big days for the Tigers' baseball team this past high school summer season. In the regional championship, he smacked a home run in the third inning as a part of a three-run rally that tied the game, then relieved starter Gannon Burns and threw four shutout innings. He escaped a sixth-inning, bases-loaded jam to help Edwardsville to a 6-5 win over Belleville West in the IHSA Class 4A regional final at Tom Pile Field.

For his efforts, Stearns has been named the iCAN Clinic Male Athlete of the Month for Edwardsville High School.

Stearns' homer came on the first pitch with two out to cut the Maroons' lead to 5-3 at the time, with Evan Funkhouser hitting a game-tying shot two batters later to pull the Tigers into a 5-5 tie.

"The momentum got killed when they put up that five-spot," Stearns said during a postgame interview. "it killed our momentum, and after they did that, we got runners on base, and Evan hit another home run to tie it up."

Although the Tigers trailed 5-2 after West's big third inning, the Tigers were able to bounce back to tie the game, and eventually won in the fifth inning.

"I think we were only down by three," Stearns said. "We got a little down on ourselves, but I think we just got back in it."

The Maroons loaded the bases in the sixth, but Stearns was able to get out of the jam and keep West at bay.

"Yeah, it's tight," Stearns said. "and you don't realize how easy it is to score runs until you've got one run to give up. But I think I did a good job of battling, and did a good job of keeping my mind straight, even with the bases loaded, because we that error down there, and then the catcher's interference to load the bases. So, I think I just had to mentally compete, work my way out of it."

The Tigers lost in the sectional semifinal 4-1 to O'Fallon last week in Edwardsville, but concluded their season with 34 wins, something Stearns said was a "great" accomplishment, along with the regional championship. Prior to the loss to O'Fallon, Edwardsville had won 28 straight games in a streak that began April 24 all the way to the sectional semifinal.

Stearns, a junior, will be a returnee next season for Coach Tim Funkhouser. Look for Stearns to be a big force in the Tigers' spring baseball lineup in 2022 not only at the plate but on the mound.