

Edwardsville holds off Collinsville 59-55

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Collinsville's Anfirnee Wilkinson is defended by Kyler Davis of Edwardsville in Friday night's rivalry game at Collinsville. Edwardsville's defense was a key to the win.

COLLINSVILLE – Edwardsville boys' basketball coach Mike Waldo knew going in he had to find a way to stop Collinsville's 6-8 senior Emondre Rickman.

His solution? Throw a double-team on him every time he touched the ball.

The double-team worked almost to perfection, limiting the Indiana State recruit scoreless in the first half and seven points in the game as the Tigers held off the Kahoks 59-55 in both sides' Southwestern Conference opener Friday night at Fletcher Gym.

“We did a good job playing defense tonight,” Waldo said. “Their two post players (Rickman and senior Sean Davis) are good players, and defending them in the low post was tough. We dug in and defended them well.”

“We knew what we had to do,” said Tiger senior Dan Marinko, who finished with eight points. “Coach Waldo had a good plan going in and we were able to execute it well.”

One thing Waldo hadn't been expecting was some hot three-point shooting from Kahok guard Ronnie Midgett, who hit five three-balls to help keep Collinsville in the game.

“We weren't counting on (Midgett) shooting all those threes,” Waldo said. “It's a credit to us that he hit that many and we still won the game.”

The Tigers had built a 10-point lead deep into the final quarter, but the Kahoks kept chipping away and managed to cut the lead to two points twice in the final minute. Edwardsville managed to get a pair of free throws each from Marinko and Mark Smith down the stretch to get the win. Collinsville went just 2-for-8 from the free-throw line in the final quarter, something Kahok coach Darin Lee wasn't happy with after the game.

“We just have to hit those free throws when we need them,” Lee said. “It was a disappointing loss for us. We can play better than what we have been.”

The Kahoks suffered a key loss when senior guard Nic Gonet went down with what appeared to be a serious right ankle injury late in the first half and didn't return.

Mark Smith, with 17 points, and Oliver Stephen, with 15, led the Tigers in scoring. The Kahoks were led by Midgett's 18 points, with Brett Langley adding 17.

Edwardsville won the junior varsity curtain-raiser 48-47 when Sammy Green's free-throw line jumper fell in at the siren.

The Tigers went to 3-2 overall, 1-0 in the Southwestern Conference; the Kahoks fell to 3-3 overall, 0-1 in the league. The Tigers host Belleville East Tuesday night, then travel to Belleville West Friday; Collinsville goes to East St. Louis Tuesday and to O'Fallon Friday.