



# **Bush, Larson Score Twice Each, Hayes, Johnson Also Score, Defense Dominates As Edwardsville Wins Homecoming Game Over Alton 42-6**

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer  
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EDWARDSVILLE – Running back Jordan Bush ran for two touchdowns of 34 and one yard, while De’Shawn Larson had scoring runs of 48 and 58 yards and Jake Curry threw for another touchdown as Edwardsville won their homecoming game 42-6 over Alton Friday night at Tiger Stadium.

The Tigers scored on their first two possessions of the game and didn’t look back in going on to the Southwestern Conference win over the visiting Redbirds on homecoming night, always an important win.

“Absolutely,” said Edwardsville head coach Matt Martin. “I thought we played really well on defense; they shouldn’t have got that score at the end there; it was disappointing. Half the line was moving throughout Alton, but it is what it is. We missed some tackles, that’s what we can control. We won the turnover battle again, we’re happy about that. Special teams played fairly well, I think we gave up a blocked field goal, that was the only disappointing thing. Offensively, we’re still our own worst enemy, we don’t have 11 guys executing the system, and that’s frustrating. Defensively,



they played well, they didn't give up any big plays, got a little bit better at tackling. We still need to improve."

The defensive line played very well, bottling up Alton's offense and making big plays themselves, with Nasim Cairo leading the way for the Tigers.

"I thought the D-line played pretty well," Martin said. "I'll have to watch film, maybe not as well as I thought, but yeah, Nasim was pretty good. Definitely put pressure on the quarterback, and getting tackles for loss in the running game. He plays hard, he's a difference-maker for us."

Larson also had two more big runs for scores in the game, as he and Bush are proving to be a very potent one-two punch for Edwardsville's running game, with the offensive line providing great blocking for the backfield.

"Right, right," Martin said. "Great run, You know, I think we're getting a hat on a hat, so that gives us a chance to have those fun runs."



Reserve running back Isaiah Johnson scored Edwardsville's final touchdown on a one-yard plunge, his first-ever varsity touchdown, and Martin couldn't have been any prouder or happier for him. It was a just reward for his hard work in practice.

“Yeah, I think the kids were excited,” Martin said, “and that might have been the best moment of the night. They’re excited. Anyone who’s ever played football knows what it’s like to be the scout team running back. It’s gotta be one of the toughest jobs on the team. For him to get a chance to score like that, it’s fun for the whole team.”

Although the Redbirds are now 1-5, the team keeps fighting and playing hard, a very good trait indeed.

“Man, it just seems like one step forward, two steps back at times for us,” said Alton head coach Eric Dickerson. “When we get down inside the five, a fumble. We’ve got to keep fighting. The kids did one heck of a job in fighting and moving the ball. I’m proud of what they did tonight. You know, we’ve just got to keep working, keep working at it.”

The Redbird defensive line did a good job of its own in helping to put pressure on Curry and the Tigers’ offense, getting some good plays of their own as well.

“I think so,” Dickerson said. “I mean, all around, these guys came out, and we got some pressure on them, and we were able to sack them a few times, a good kid back there. But I think we did a good job. Obviously, we gave up some points, but that comes with some turnovers and putting our defense in bad positions.”

The Redbirds scored on the last play of the game, a touchdown pass from Graham McAfoos to Keith Gilchrese, and it raised the spirits of the team tremendously.

“You know, it was great to finally get in the end zone,” Dickerson said. “After the drives that we had and moving the ball, and either stalling out or just shooting ourselves in the foot. So it was good we were able to score.”

It didn’t take Edwardsville to score on the game’s opening possession, as both Curry and Bush did most of the work, getting the vital yardage, and climaxing with a nifty 39-yard touchdown run up the middle by Bush, taking advantage of good blocking, to put the Tigers up 7-0 after 2:09 had been played. On the next possession, Edwardsville doubled its lead when Curry threw 32 yards to Aaron Hayes, who made a spectacular diving catch in the end zone to make it 14-0 for the Tigers.

McAfoos and Gilchrese had a good drive on the next Alton possession, with Gilchrese coming up with some good runs, but the drive stalled out, and the Tigers got the ball back. The Redbird defense held Edwardsville on the next possession, but it ended when Johnnie Robinson intercepted a McAfoos pass. Two plays later, Larson broke left and ran 58 yards into the end zone to give Edwardsville a 21-0 lead.

Late in the second, Gavin Walls tried a 47-yard field goal, but the Redbirds blocked the kick, making the score 21-0 for the Tigers at the interval.

Alton started the second half with a promising drive, where McAfoos ran the ball well and completed passes to Gilchrese and Julian Caffey to keep things going. The Redbirds fumbled the ball away to the Tigers at their own 11 to end the drive, however, and from there, the defenses dominated until late in the third, when Larson broke left again and sailed 45 yards for a touchdown that put Edwardsville up 28-0 with 2:25 left in the third.

The Tigers got their final two touchdowns in the fourth quarter, with Bush going in from the one, then Johnson opening his varsity touchdown account with a one-yard run with 3:50 left to make it 42-0, triggering the running clock rule. McAfoos connected with Gilchrese on the game's final play to make the final 42-6.

The Tigers are now 4-2 and play at Belleville East next Saturday afternoon at 1 p.m., while the Redbirds are now 1-5 and host East St. Louis at Public School Stadium next Friday night in a 7 p.m. kickoff. Dickerson knows that his players will keep working hard and striving.

“Just keep working,” Dickerson said. “And that’s what we’re going to do. These kids, they’ve improved from day one, and they show up every Monday ready to go. So, I wouldn’t expect anything different come this week.”



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