



# **Kellen Brnfre Has Big Game, Scores Four Touchdowns, Including Punt Return, Passes For Fifth As Tigers Clinch Winning Season**

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer  
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BELLEVILLE - Edwardsville sophomore Kellen Brnfre had a big day, scoring four touchdowns, including a brilliant 71-yard punt return, and passed for a fifth to Michael Hedge as the Tigers clinched a winning season with a 45-21 win over Belleville East Saturday afternoon at Charlie Woodford Field.

Brnfre scored three of his touchdowns in the first half in helping the Tigers build up a 28-0 halftime lead en route to the Southwestern Conference win in a very workman-like performance for the team.

"Yeah, I thought, in particular, we had a very good first half," said Edwardsville head coach Matt Martin. "I thought out kids were flying around, executing well, and we looked like a very good football team."

Brnfre made a big difference in the game with his four touchdowns, and it's a trait that makes him a key player for the Tigers.

"Kellen's a difference-maker," Martin said. "He does a lot of good things for us. We need him focused in on every play, because when he is, and he's playing hard on every play, he's one of our best players, if not our best."

Running back De'Shawn Larson also had a big game on the day, running for key gains and first downs to help keep drives going.

"Just trying to get Shawn more touches," Martin said, "That's a lot, and we're trying to learn that. We've got a ways to go."

The Lancers kept hanging in, cutting the lead to 35-14 on a blocked punt that was recovered in the end zone for a touchdown, but the Tigers were able to weather the storm.

"Our punter hurt himself on a tackle, said he couldn't punt anymore," Martin said. "So we had our backup in, our wall got blew up, and shoved back into a first-time punter. So it wasn't good."

Another bugaboo was inopportune penalties that cost the Tigers on potential scoring plays and on goal-to-go situations that backed up Edwardsville.

"Yeah, I don't know, sometimes, I thought some of those were questionable," Martin said. "The (officiating) crew did a good job, so they're probably right. We'll find out if those were holds."

Overall, the Tigers played well and won a game that helped clinch another winning season with two tough games ahead to finish the regular season.

"Proud of our kids," Martin said. "It guaranteed a winning season for us, not that we can't win these other two, but this was our best chance. So proud of the kids for having a good week of practice and executing today."

After holding the Lancers to a three-and-out on the opening possession, the Tigers took the ball and marched up the field in their first possession, with Jordan Bush getting a pair of key first downs on the drive, which was climaxed with Brnfre's first touchdown of the game, going 14 yards on a reverse that made it 7-0 after Gavin Walls' conversion with 6:55 left in the opening quarter.

On the next scoring drive, which started late in the first, the Tigers had a big pass play from quarterback Jake Curry to Brnfre that covered 34 yards to the Lancer three, and three plays later, Curry passed two yards to Brnfre in the end zone for the touchdown that made it 14-0 after the conversion.

On the next possession, East had a promising drive that had both Braylon Grayson and Moisey Trimble getting key gains to keep the drive going, but the Edwardsville defense stiffened and forced a turnover on downs, which the Tigers promptly converted on as Brnfre passed 29 yards to a wide-open Hedge for the touchdown with 3:23 left in the first half to make the score 21-0 Edwardsville.

The Tigers forced a punt on the next possession, and Brnfre let the ball bounce twice before picking it up and going up the middle 71 yards for a touchdown, his third of the half, with 42.8 seconds left to make the score 28-0 Edwardsville at halftime.





The Tigers scored again on the opening possession of the second half, going 80 yards as Curry connected to Iose Epenesa for 45 yards and another 11 to Brnfre before throwing

two yards to Epenesa for the touchdown that made it 35-0 after the conversion with 9:56 left in the third.

East started a rally on the next possession when, on a punting situation on fourth down, a fumbled snap that was recovered by Grayson led to a first down to keep the drive alive, climaxing on a 21-yard touchdown pass from Darrion Millinder, Jr. to Carl Collins for a touchdown to make it 35-7 after the conversion from Jack Todd. On the next Tiger possession, a blocked punt was recovered in the end zone by Kameron McCall with 6:22 left in the third to make it 35-14 after Todd's convert.

The Tigers responded well with a long drive, with Larson having key gains both rushing and pass receiving to keep things going. Penalties helped stall the drive, and Walls hit on a 26-yard field goal with 1:54 left in the third to make it 38-14.

Edwardsville got its final touchdown on a Brnfre two-yard run with 8:16 left in the fourth quarter to make the score 45-14 before the Lancers got their final touchdown on a 20-yard pass from Grayson to Carey Martin with 4:13 left to make the final score 45-21, as the Tigers were able to run out the clock.

Edwardsville is now 5-2 on the year and meets East St. Louis in their SWC finale Friday night at Tiger Stadium in a 7 p.m. kickoff, while the Lancers are now 1-6 and go to Belleville West in their crosstown rivalry game next Saturday afternoon at 1 p.m.











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