

Standout Edwardsville Lineman Nasim Cairo Is One Of Tigers' Defensive Leaders As Stretch Run Approaches

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - Edwardsville defensive tackle Nasim Cairo had a big game against Alton on Oct. 1, having a career-high four sacks and having several tackles in the Tigers' 42-6 homecoming win over the Redbirds at Tiger Stadium.

After the game, Cairo could be seen with a bandage next to his right eye, a testament to how hard he played, going all out on every play to help Edwardsville go on a win and then a triumph over Belleville East has made the Tigers 5-2 overall on the season.

"I'm feeling great," Cairo said in a postgame interview. "I've got a little war scar on my face, but hey, we're going through it, and I just feel great right now. We played great, everybody was on cue. We had some tackling problems that reoccur, but I feel like everybody did their job tonight."

The Tigers have bounced back exceptionally well from a Sept. 17 loss to O'Fallon, winning over both Belleville West, Alton and Belleville East in their three subsequent games.

"I feel like these games really help us build our team," Cairo said, "and look at what we can do better because we knew that we were better in numbers and better in size coming into this game. But we started to play, play our butts off. I think this is a good stepping stone for the team, and the teams we're going to play in the future."

After playing the Lancers, Edwardsville has back-to-back big games against East St. Louis on Oct. 15 and CBC on Oct. 22, both at home, to wind up the regular season.

Cairo is very much looking forward to the challenges of both the Flyers and Cadets, two of the best teams in the St. Louis area, with East Side always one of the nation's top teams.

"For sure," Cairo said. "I love competition. I hear all the time from Coach (Matt Martin), because I feel like good players against good players make better plays, and make better players. So I'm ready to go against somebody to play football."

Cairo had a very good game against Alton, with the four sacks, and he felt very good after the game, continuing a tradition of playing well against the Redbirds.

"I've always had good games against Alton for some reason," Cairo said. "My sophomore year was my biggest game. I had two sacks, six tackles. Last year was one of my biggest games; I had two sacks and another six tackles, going both ways. And then, this year, same thing just played my butt off and had a really good game."

Cairo and his teammates are indeed looking forward to the stretch run of the regular season, looking to end the regular season on a high note, with the postseason coming soon.

"Yeah, I mean, right now, I'll have my last season with my guys," Cairo said, "and go on to college after."