

# Edwardsville Takes First Set Over Mother McAuley, But Mighty Macs Rally To Defeat Tigers 27-29, 25-21, 25-16 To Advance To IHSA Class 4A Final

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BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL - Edwardsville High's girls' volleyball team gave Chicago Mother McAuley Catholic everything they wanted, saving two set points to win a first

set thriller, but the Mighty Macs rallied to take the final two sets and the match over the Tigers 27-29, 25-21, 25-16 in the first IHSA Class 4A semifinal Friday evening at Illinois State University's Redbird Arena in Bloomington-Normal.

The Tigers played very strong throughout the match, but in the end, couldn't overcome McAuley's duo of Peyton Brokemon and Ellie White, the two best players for the Macs.

"Tonight was a tough match," said Edwardsville head coach Heather Ohlau. "The players battled but came up short. Mother McAuley brought a strong offensive attack in their outsides. We, unfortunately, were not able to stop them as efficiently as we would have liked. Our defense did a great job of keeping the ball playable, and our offense was able to produce a variety of attacks. We were not able to capitalize on our serves and allowed Mother McAuley to put strings of points together."

The two sides split the opening 14 points of the first set before the Tigers, behind a pair of kills from Gabby Saye and another kill from Emma Garner, took an 11-8 lead. The Tigers were able to extend the lead to 15-11 before a pair of kills from Brokemon and a combined block from Brokemon and Maeve Moonan cut the lead to 15-14, forcing Edwardsville to call time out. Kills from Syd Harris and Garner brought the Tigers to a 17-14 lead before the Macs reeled off four points in a row to take an 18-17 lead. The teams exchanged points again before McAuley took a 21-19 edge, forcing the final time out from the Tigers of the set. Edwardsville got the ball back and a pair of Harris points gave the Tigers the lead back at 22-21, and the teams exchanged points again, with Brokemon saving a set point with a kill that made the score 24-24. After the Macs made it 25-24, Garner saved the set point, then Kloi Karban saved another set point to make it 26-26. After an exchange gave Edwardsville set point at 28-27, Saye closed out the set with a kill to give the Tigers a 29-27 win to put Edwardsville up 1-0 in the match.

The teams split the first four points of the second set before the Macs, behind Carolin Macander's service, took a 6-2 lead. McAuley was able to maintain a three-point lead, and extended it to 12-7 on kills by Brokemon and Moonan. From there, the Macs kept the lead at four points, not allowing the Tigers to go on a run until late, when Edwardsville rallied, helped by kills from Garner and Saye, to within 24-21, but a White kill gave the Macs the second set 25-21 to level the match and force a deciding third set.

At the start of the third set, White, Macander and Keira Ohse had kills to give the Macs a 3-1 lead, but Edwardsville got kills from Ava Waltenberger and Saye to take a 5-4 lead. A pair of Brokemon kills, along with a kill from Mary Kate Sheehan gave McAuley the lead back at 8-5, and the Macs were able to maintain a two-point lead until at 11-9, McAuley scored four of the next six points to take a 15-11 lead. The Macs extended the lead to 18-12 on both a combined block from both White and Ohse and a Brokemon kill. The Tigers came back to make the score 20-15, but McAuley scored

five of the last six points of the set, closing out the match with a White kill to give the Macs the 25-16 win and the match, advancing them to the state final.

Saye led the Tigers with 13 kills, while Garner had 10, with Griffin having 19 assists and Maddie Vieth came up with 14. Sydney Davis served up 15 points, with Vieth and Harris having 12 points each, and Griffin having 11 points. Saye and Harris had three blocks each, while Waltenberger had two, and Kaitlyn Conway had 17 digs, Vieth came up with nine and Garner had seven.

White led McAuley with 23 kills, with Brokemond adding 18 and Moonan three, Macander had 40 assists, while Gigi Navarette added five. Both Macander and Navarette served up 14 points each to go along with 13 points from Sam Falk and 12 points from Olivia Klapp, with Navarette contributing 14 digs and Macander 10 and Ohse had a pair of blocks.

McAuley is now 34-6 and will play Aurora Metea Valley, a 25-23, 25-13 winner over Barrington, in the final at approximately 8:55 p.m., with the Tigers, now 33-8, meeting the Broncos in the third and fourth place match, starting at about 7:25 p.m.

In the other semifinal matches earlier in the day, in Class 1A, Champaign St. Thomas More won over Freeport Aquin Catholic 19-25, 25-22, 25-18, while Augusta Southeastern defeated Springfield Lutheran 25-16, 25-23. In Class 2A, Lombard Montini Catholic defeated Breese Mater Dei Catholic 25-11, 25-10 and Pleasant Plains won over Palos Heights Chicago Christian 25-17, 25-21. In the Class 3A semis, LaGrange Park Nazareth Academy defeated Joliet Catholic Academy 25-21, 25-15 and Belvidere North won over Normal Community West 25-18, 25-17.