



# **Shaun Pacatte's Three In Second Overtime Gives Tigers 49-47 Win Over Alton, Dedicates Basket To Late Cousin**

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EDWARDSVILLE - Edwardsville boys basketball senior forward Shaun Pacatte hit one of the biggest shots of his career Friday night, sinking a three with 4.4 seconds left in the second overtime to give the Tigers a big 49-47 win over Alton in both teams' Southwestern Conference opener, as well as the Tigers' home opener, Friday night at Lucco-Jackson Gym.

The winning basket climaxed an emotional night for Pacatte, who was playing with the memory of a cousin who passed away in 2017, on his mind.

"Tonight was very emotional," Pacatte said in a postgame interview. "When I was in eighth grade, I had a cousin named Heather, who was really, really close to me, passed away, and (Saturday's) her birthday. And I think some things are meant to be, and as that game got closer and closer, I really, truly felt something bigger. I knew something great was going to happen. I'm blessed to have the opportunity. I never think about shooting, but I'm very thankful for tonight."

As far as the game itself went, it was a typical Southwestern Conference game, where it was action-packed and thrill-a-minute basketball for the entire 40 minutes. It was a tough game on both sides, but the Tigers held together and found a way to win.

"I was not nervous," Pacatte said. "I mean, first home game, a little bit jittery, Good nervousness, so I wanted to perform well. I knew the team, we have a lot of young guys. I never played in front of a crowd with COVID last year. And then, we have a lot of sophomores, some young guys. I think that's going through everyone's mind, and it was really nice to get out there to that great start. You're always in a battle every night."

Pacatte referred to a great start by the Tigers, scoring their first 12 points in the opening quarter, shutting out the Redbirds, but after the score became 14-0, Alton went on a 12-0 run to cut the lead, trailing by only 18-16 at halftime. The Redbirds played very hard throughout the evening and Pacatte gave credit to them.

"They made it tough," Pacatte said. "After that 12-0 (first quarter), they responded, and that's what every team's going to do to us. We've just got to keep pushing forward and learning. We won by two, but it's still a big game to learn from, whether or not that shot went in. It was one basket; it takes a lot of things in a game to win."

It's only the first conference game of many, and there's much more big games ahead for the Tigers. Pacatte's goals for himself and his team are straightforward.

"I know we have a very young team," Pacatte said. "We're going to have some rough nights, but effort, I know we'll always have effort, and I know we'll always have defense. Sometimes, shots won't go in, but I think by the end of the year, we're going to be playing great basketball. I want to win the conference, and go from there. Last year, we had a very unfortunate ending at Belleville East, and again, that comes down to one shot. All these practices the whole year might just come down to one shot to play just one more game. And I hope that myself and my team can always keep that in the back of our minds."

Pacatte is very grateful to have the fans back in the gym, cheering him and his teammates on, and to return to somewhat normal conditions.

"It was great," Pacatte said. "Like I said, I hadn't played for more than 50 fans in my sophomore year and in JV. And my senior year, I'm thankful for it, but at the same time, even after last year, it really was eye-opening, thankful for just having my parents to be able to come.

"I never once imagined not having a varsity game where my parents have to watch it from the living room. Last year was not the best at some things, but it was also really eye-opening to me. Now, I'm grateful for a lot more, like the fans. Just really happy for tonight, and I'm really thankful it was just a lot bigger than basketball for me right now, and I'm really overwhelmed."