

# **Wilkinson Leads Three Kahoks In Double Figures, Hold Edwardsville To Six Points In First Half In Collinsville's 56-34 Win Over Tigers**

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer  
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EDWARDSVILLE - Jake Wilkinson led Collinsville with 17 points, while Tray Swygeart added 12 and Deante Franklin netted 11 points to help lead the Kahoks to a 56-34 Southwestern Conference boys basketball win Friday night at Lucco-Jackson Gym.

The Kahoks used a swarming defense to scored nine of the game's first 10 points in holding the Tigers to two first half baskets and six points in total in a dominant first half performance.

"We're really just having a hard time carrying things over from practice," said Edwardsville head coach Dustin Battas. "We practiced really good yesterday. We have some things on offense we're trying to execute, then the game starts, and they're playing just like we expect them to, man-to-man, guarding guys that we thought they would be guarding. We just had a hard time carrying over things from practice. So that's the puzzling part right now. As a coaching staff, we're just trying to figure out a way to carry things over that we're doing it. The COVID stuff, having young guys, I get that. But it's a problem right now. Those starts are hard to go, and then, you get 16 behind. It's 16-4 after the first quarter, it really changes things from a game plan standpoint. We've just somehow got to find a way to carry over things that we're practicing, get our guys more confident and more aggressive, score more baskets. And that's been just kind of a glaring hole for us for a couple of weeks. We are practicing better, just having a hard time carrying those things our in a game."

The Tigers came out in the second half and played much better, driving to the basket and playing more aggressively."

"I told them I thought we fought harder in the second half," Battas said. "We hope in a varsity basketball team, you're at that intensity level all the time. There's a lot of moving parts, and these guys are young men and they've got a lot on their plates, too. I told them we're going to try to worry a little bit less of the X's and O's and worry a bit more about the man, coach the man and make sure we're getting every ounce out of them that we can in supporting them and encouraging them to do better.

"We know they can do better, they want to do better," Battas continued. "We did show some signs there of life out there in the second half; we just needed to do that for 32 minutes."

The game was played in an empty gym because of restrictions brought about by the resurgence of the COVID-19 pandemic, and it created a much different atmosphere than normal.

"It is," Battas said. "It feels almost like a summer game; I don't know if that had much to do with it. It's actually louder here for practice than it is a game, because we have people on the balcony and what not. But I just told our guys as with all the other stuff that's hit us this year, that we can't worry about that. Because there's no fans is not why we could have ran the play the right way, or because there's no fans is why we couldn't get back into transition defense. I think those help you emotionally sometimes and maybe give you some adrenaline pumping, but the things we need to fix are things that are correctable, and like I said, carry over from practice into a game. But it is a unique experience, there's not doubt, and some of our guys have to get used to it."

The defensive effort from the Kahoks has been the norm the last few games, and it has helped Collinsville tremendously.

"We've really been guarding well," said Kahok head coach Darin Lee. "We guarded Quincy well, we guarded Cahokia, and our man-to-man defense has been really good here lately. So hopefully, we can keep it up. We've kind of hung our hats on our man-to-man."





It's been a point of emphasis all season for Collinsville, and the team has steadily improved on its defense the entire season so far.

"Yeah, it's been a focus all year," Lee said, "and we've just continually gotten better. We changed our rotation a little bit, we went a little smaller. So we've got a lot of guys six-two, six-three range, we can switch every screen. So that helps us, but here since the tournament, these last two games, we defended well."

Lee was concerned going in about playing in the empty gym, but was also happy about the kids concentrating on the job at hand and used their own energy to help the team.

"Absolutely, big time," Lee said. "Because we didn't have this last year, at least we had some people, right? So I was happy the kids brought their own energy. and I was happy with that."

Early baskets from the Kahoks helped them build their early lead and the offensive surge was also a big factor in the game.

"We got some buckets early," Lee said. "We got a three out of Deante Franklin. He wasn't in our rotation early in the season, but he's really came on to be a bit part of our team. He can make shots. Jake Wilkinson had a pretty good game; he got some buckets early.

A basket from Wilkinson and a three from Franklin started the Kahoks off on a 5-0 lead, which grew to 9-1 on free throws from Nick Horras and another basket from Wilkinson, with the only Tiger point being a free throw from Jordan Bush. The Kahoks then went on a 7-3 run to end the quarter behind Wilkinson, Devin Davis and Swygeart to take a 16-4 lead after the first quarter.

The Kahoks run continued into the second quarter, as Collinsville outscored Edwardsville 10-2, with Franklin, Davis and Swygeart all leading the charge, scoring the first nine points of the period before Bush scored the Tigers' only basket of the period. The half ended with Collinsville ahead 26-6.

To their tremendous credit, the Tigers fought back in the third quarter, with Lucas Greer and Malik Allen leading the charge that saw Edwardsville cut into the lead. The Kahoks countered with baskets from Wilkinson and Horras to keep Edwardsville at bay, with Collinsville taking a 37-17 lead after three quarters. The fourth quarter saw the Kahoks continue to build on their lead, with the Tigers continuing to fight back and make some good plays, but in the end, Collinsville went on to their 56-34 win.

Along with the top three scorers for the Kahoks, Nick Horras had eight points, Davis scored four points, Matt Clark had three points and Dayton Horras scored a single point. The Tigers were led by Bush and Allen, who scored 13 points each, while A.J. Tillman, Bryce Spiller, Isayah Kloster and Jake Siebers all had two points each.

The Kahoks are now 11-6 and host Alton Tuesday night and are at Belleville East next Friday, with both games starting at 7:30 p.m. The Tigers are now 7-8 and host Belleville West Tuesday and are at Alton next Friday night, with both games also set to tip-off at 7:30 p.m.





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