

Olivia Baca Scores All Three Goals In Edwardsville's Season Opener, Is iCAN Clinic Female Athlete of Month

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EDWARDSVILLE - Edwardsville senior striker Olivia Baca had all three goals for her team, including the first two one minute apart, as the Tigers saw off Belleville Althoff Catholic 3-0 in the opening match of the Metro Cup showcase at Tiger Stadium Monday night.



Baca's hat trick got Edwardsville off to a tremendous start to the 2022 campaign as the Tigers were in complete control of the match from the opening whistle, not allowing the defending IHSA Class 1A state champions very many opportunities. Baca meanwhile scored in the sixth, seventh and 58th minutes to give Edwardsville their first three points of the season.

Olivia is an iCAN Clinic Female Athlete of the Month for EHS.

"I feel great," Baca said during a post-match interview. "We've got a lot of new faces and I think we're just gelling all together. And I think it's going really well."

Baca and fellow senior striker Payton Federmann were a dangerous combination throughout the night, with both having excellent chances off of each other through balls. Baca feels that the combination will give opponents problems throughout the season.

"I think we're going to combine great," Baca said, "if we can just look for each other and trust each other. I think it's going to work out really well this season."

Baca described each of her goals as the result of hard work and being in the right spot.

"For the first one, it was almost a breakaway situation," Baca said. "Kylie Peel, props to her for passing me the ball. I was able to have a defender on my back and then, just slide it in the upper right-hand corner of the goal. And then, the second one, it was off a corner and Macie Hockett passed the ball back to me and I faked the defender out and was able to touch to my right and hit it with my right (foot). The third one was almost the same situation as the first one. I kind of tried to get it past my defender and the goalie was able to make a great save. I was able to finish off the rebound."

As far as the season itself goes, Baca is confident that the Tigers will have a great season if the team can play together well.

"I think we can be great if we play together," Baca said. "And we will. And I think that just getting to learn each other and trust the process, I think it's going to work out great."

The main goal for the Tigers, of course, is to go as far as possible in the IHSA Class 3A playoffs and win the Southwestern Conference, among other goals.

"Obviously, make it as far as possible," Baca said. "We want to be conference champs, we want to be regional champs. I think getting to learn each other is also a really good, a really important aspect and goal for all of us, too. We have a lot of new faces."

But the win is a good opening act for the Tigers, with the prospect of more to come as the season goes along.

"Yeah, that's for sure," Baca said with a smile.