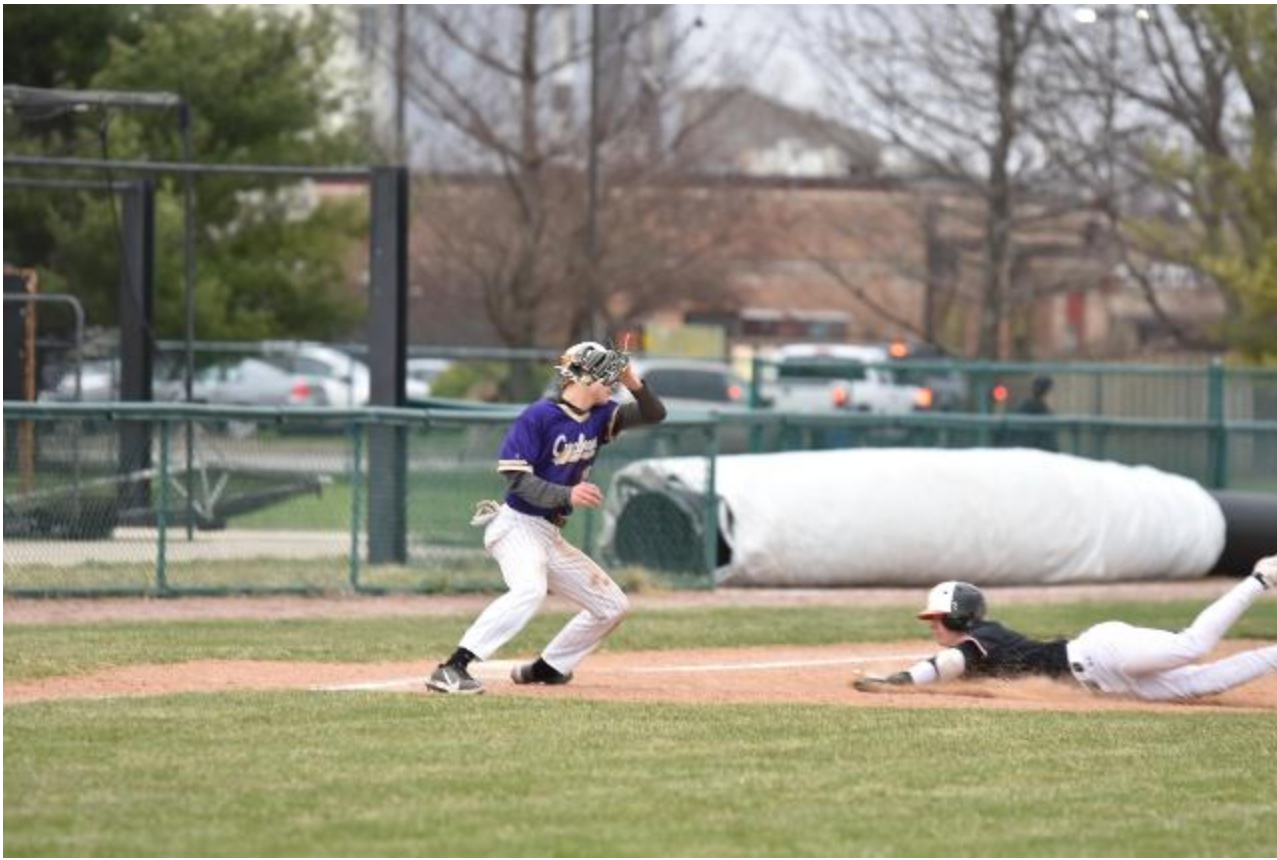


# **Copeland's Four Hits, Burns Mound Performance Spark Tigers 9-1 Win Over Sacred-Heart Griffin**

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer  
March 29 2022 1:40 PM





EDWARDSVILLE - Senior pitcher Gannon Burns allowed only one run on three hits while striking out six in five innings of work, while Caleb Copeland had four hits and three RBIs as Edwardsville's five-run third inning was enough to give the Tigers a 9-1 win over Springfield Sacred Heart-Griffin Catholic Monday afternoon at Tom Pile Field.

Burns was in complete control, at one point, retiring eight Cyclone batters in a row as the Tigers went on to their seventh straight win to open the season.

"I feel real good," said Edwardsville head coach Tim Funkhouser. "Gannon, every time you go out, you know what you're going to get. He's going to be a little nippy, laying the ball around the zone and continue to compete each pitch. And he always gives us great performance and then, we got rattled around, 14 hits today and after the first couple of innings, where we didn't do as much, we were able to create some offense after that and come away with the victory."

The Tigers got good at-bats and hits in the decisive third inning, with everyone contributing overall to the win.

"Cade Hardy's taken a lot better at-bats and is improving every day," Funkhouser said. "and Caleb Copeland's been swinging a real hot bat. We have contributors throughout the lineup and Riley Iffrig had been struggling a little bit and put a swing on a ball today

and then, I think, got another hit later. So we have a lot of guys who can do different things and even though not everybody's not clicking right now, I think there's a lot of positives that are coming out and a lot of things that are moving forward too that we can do better."

It's still early in the season and Funkhouser is confident the Tigers will start warming up as the weather gets to warming up as well.

"We've been scoring a lot of runs," Funkhouser said with a smile and laugh. "From the warming up standpoint, I think just getting into a groove or being warmer in our shoes and that'll be a big part. But from the standpoint of our guys competing and coming to the yard each day, I couldn't be happier with our guys. They love playing together and they love trying to get better and ultimately, competing. So those are all good signs. We'll enjoy the victory tonight and the challenge tomorrow."

The Cyclones had a pair of early threats, but Burns was able to get out of the jams with strikeouts and ground ball outs that kept SH-G off the board. Edwardsville also had a pair of threats in the opening innings that went by the boards as well. The Tigers broke through in the bottom of the third as Cole Funkhouser drew a walk and went to second on an errant pickoff throw by the pitcher. Grant Huebner singled Funkhouser to third, where he scored on a Spencer Stearns base hit, with Huebner going to third and Stearns taking second on the throw to the plate. Both runners scored on a Copeland single to make it 3-0, then Iffrig singled Copeland to third, and both runners advanced on another pickoff throw that got away for an error to the pitcher, Copeland scoring on the play. Kayden Jennings was hit by a pitch and Jacoby Roberson singled to load the bases, where Iffrig scored on a Hardy sacrifice fly to center that made the score 5-0 for the Tigers. Jennings went to third and Roberson to second on a wild pitch, but a strikeout ended the inning.

Burns went rolling along until the fifth, where Charlie Linderman led off with a single, stole second and scored on an Andrew McDowell double to the left-field fence, scoring Linderman with the only run of the game for the Cyclones. Burns struck out the next batter to end the inning.

Roberson led off the home half with a single, went to second on a wild pitch and scored on a Hardy double to make it 6-1, then Funkhouser singled home Hardy to make it 7-1. Later in the inning, Copeland singled home Funkhouser to make it 8-1 and in the sixth, a Huebner RBI single scored Alec Marchetto to give the Tigers a 9-1 lead. Luke Geggus struck out the side in the sixth and Joe Chiarodo struck out the first two batters and got the third to fly out to left to give the Tigers the 9-1 win.

Edwardsville is now 7-0 on the year and face a pair of big challenges in Frankfort Lincoln-Way East Tuesday afternoon at home in a 3:30 p.m. start, then play at Columbia on Friday afternoon in a 4:30 p.m. start. Funkhouser is looking forward to the game against Lincoln-Way East.

"Lincoln-Way East is a team that's coming down on their spring trip to play us and Belleville West," Funkhouser said, "and I'm glad it worked out. It'll be a good challenge to see where we're at. I know they've got a good team and we've heard about them in the past, so it'll be good to match up with a different team and see what we're made of."



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