

Stearns Has Big Day: He Drives In Five Runs in Two Games, As Tigers Top Francis Howell and Jersey In Baseball

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EDWARDSVILLE - Edwardsville senior infielder and pitcher Spencer Stearns had a big day at the plate, driving in a combined five runs in two games, while fanning six in the opener as the Tigers took a pair of games on Friday, defeating Francis Howell of Weldon Spring, Mo., in St. Charles County, 4-0, then winning over Jersey 7-3 at Tom Pile Field.

The Tigers have now won their last three in a row and have won five of their last eight games as the postseason approaches.

In the opener against the Vikings, Edwardsville scored twice in the third, starting with a leadoff walk to Joe Chiarodo, who stole second one out later, with Cade Hardy also walking. Chiarodo then stole third on a double steal and scored when the catcher's throw got away into left field, Hardy still on second. Stearns then singled home Hardy to make it 2-0 for the Tigers.

Stearns singled home two more runs in the fifth, scoring Kaylen Jennings and Hardy to make it 4-0, and from there, Stearns and Alec Marchetto shut down the Francis Howell bats to preserve the win.

Stearns had two hits and drove in three runs for Edwardsville, while Jennings had the only other hit of the game for the Tigers. Stearns also fanned six in six innings on the mound, with Marchetto striking out one in his one inning of work.

In the nightcap against the Panthers, the Tigers again scored first, getting an RBI single from Jacoby Roberson to score Stearns, then in the second, Cole Funkhouser's sacrifice fly to right scored Gannon Burns to make it 2-0, then Stearns singled to left, scoring Tyler Powell and Hardy to make it 4-0. Edwardsville added another run in the third when a Burns ground out to short scored Jennings, who had singled and stole second and third, making it 5-0.

Jersey got on the board in the top of the fourth when Austin Hayes singled home Sam Lamer to make it 5-1 for Edwardsville. The Tigers countered in the fifth when Burns singled home both Roberson and Jennings to increase the lead to 7-1. In the sixth, Hayes reached on an error by the shortstop, allowing Lamer to score and in the seventh, Drake Goetten hit into a fielder's choice grounder to short, forcing Walker and allowing Tyler Brunaugh to score to make the final 7-3.

Stearns had two hits and drove in a pair of runs in the nightcap for the Tigers, while Roberson had two hits and an RBI, Lucas Huebner had a pair of hits, Burns had a hit and drove in three runs, both Jennings and Hardy had hits and Funkhouser drove in a run.

Both Walker and Ethan Klunk had two hits each for the Panthers, while Goetten and Hayes both had a hit and RBI each and both Blake Carey and Lamer each had a hit.

Jake Holder struck out a pair of batters while on the mound for Edwardsville, with Joey Meador having the only strikeout on the mound for Jersey.

The Panthers are now 14-15 and conclude the regular season this coming week, hosting Triad at Ken Schell Field on Tuesday, then are at Alton on Wednesday and play Collinsville on Thursday, with all games starting at 4:30 p.m., then open their postseason at the Class 3A in the Triad regional, going up against Civic Memorial on May 25 in a 4 p.m. start.

The Tigers are now 27-3 and play their final Southwestern Conference series of the season on Tuesday and Thursday against O'Fallon, meeting the Panthers at home on Tuesday, then playing the return game at Blazier Field Thursday, both games starting at 4:30 p.m. The Tigers host their own regional at Tom Pile Field, and play against Quincy May 24 at 4:30 p.m.



