

Tigers Notch 30-Win Season Over Alton In Regional Semifinals

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
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ALTON – The Edwardsville High School baseball team officially eclipsed the 30-win mark this season after they defeated the Alton High School Redbirds 16-4 in the regional semifinals Wednesday night at Gordon Moore. It's the third season in a row the Tigers have won 30 or more.

A game that was originally scheduled to take place at 4:30 p.m. at AHS was rain-delayed a couple of times and changed venue. The Tigers and Redbirds finally began to

play around 7:30 p.m. Wednesday at Lloyd Hopkins Field making for a long day for both teams. They also had to battle the wet turf making even routine plays difficult.

“I think it was, but I think you have to compete within it,” Edwardsville head coach Tim Funkhouser said about the conditions. “It was an odd game from that standpoint. I think we were all antsy to get out on the field.”

The delay and playing conditions didn't bother Edwardsville one bit though. They still came out swinging. Alton's starting pitcher Alex Siatos blanked the Tigers in the first inning picking up a couple of strikeouts, but Edwardsville did their damage in the second and third.

Edwardsville, being the home team, blew the game wide open in the bottom of the second.

Kayden Jennings got things started with a single and then Joseph Chiarodo followed suit. Spencer Stearns got walked and the Tigers found themselves with the bases loaded and two outs.

In his only at-bat of the game, Riley Iffrig hit a two-RBI single. Runners were now on the corners. Caleb Copeland stepped up to the box and ripped a triple scoring two more runs. He eventually scored himself after Siatos balked. Edwardsville led 5-0.

Spencer Stearns pitched the first three innings for the Tigers and blanked Alton bringing Edwardsville back up to bat. Alton had a new arm throwing as Max Ontis took to the mound.

After a single, a walk, and a hit by pitch, the Tigers had the bases loaded nobody out. Grant Huber stepped up and hit a bases-clearing double to make it 8-0. Stearns swapped places with him after his double. Edwardsville got the bases loaded again and made it 10-0 after a fielder's choice.

The Redbirds did have a little fight in them though when they scored their four runs in the top of the fourth. After a single from Logan Bogard and a couple of walks from Edwardsville's Jake Holder, the redbirds had the bases loaded and no outs.

Ayden Diaz singled scoring Bogard, Siatos got hit by a pitch scoring Deon Harrington, and Ontis got walked scoring Roman Cross. Edwardsville brought in a new pitcher being Tyler Powell. Another run would score in time but a flyout and fielder's choice double play ended the inning. Alton only trailed now 10-4.

Of course, the Tigers weren't done yet. They tacked on six more in the bottom of the fifth to get it to the eventual mercy rule. The highlight of the game was Chiarodo's walk-off three-run homer, one that he wasn't expecting.

"I thought it was going to hit the wall and be a double, so I was hustling out of the box, but then I saw the umpire move his hand around, so I was happy," Chiarodo said postgame.

Funkhouser was happy with Chiarodo's two-for-three performance.

"Joe put a good swing on it," Funkhouser said. "He's been a guy ready to break out. It's good to see him get a couple of hits today."

The Tigers will move on to the regional finals where they'll take on the winner between Granite City and Quincy. That game is scheduled for 10 a.m. Saturday, May 28, at AHS.

