

Tigers Baseball Shuts Out Belleville East To Move On To Sectional Championship Game

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
June 1 2022 9:45 PM



EDWARDSVILLE – The Edwardsville High School baseball team opened their regular season on a 22-game win streak. Their first loss wasn't until May 3. It was handed to them by the at the time undefeated Belleville East Lancers by a score of 2-0. The two teams split the regular-season series.

Now the Tigers (32-4) won when it mattered most. They beat the Lancers 10-0 after six innings in the Class 4A Bloomington Sectional Semifinals. They played at SIUE yesterday evening and ended the Lancers' season at 27-9.

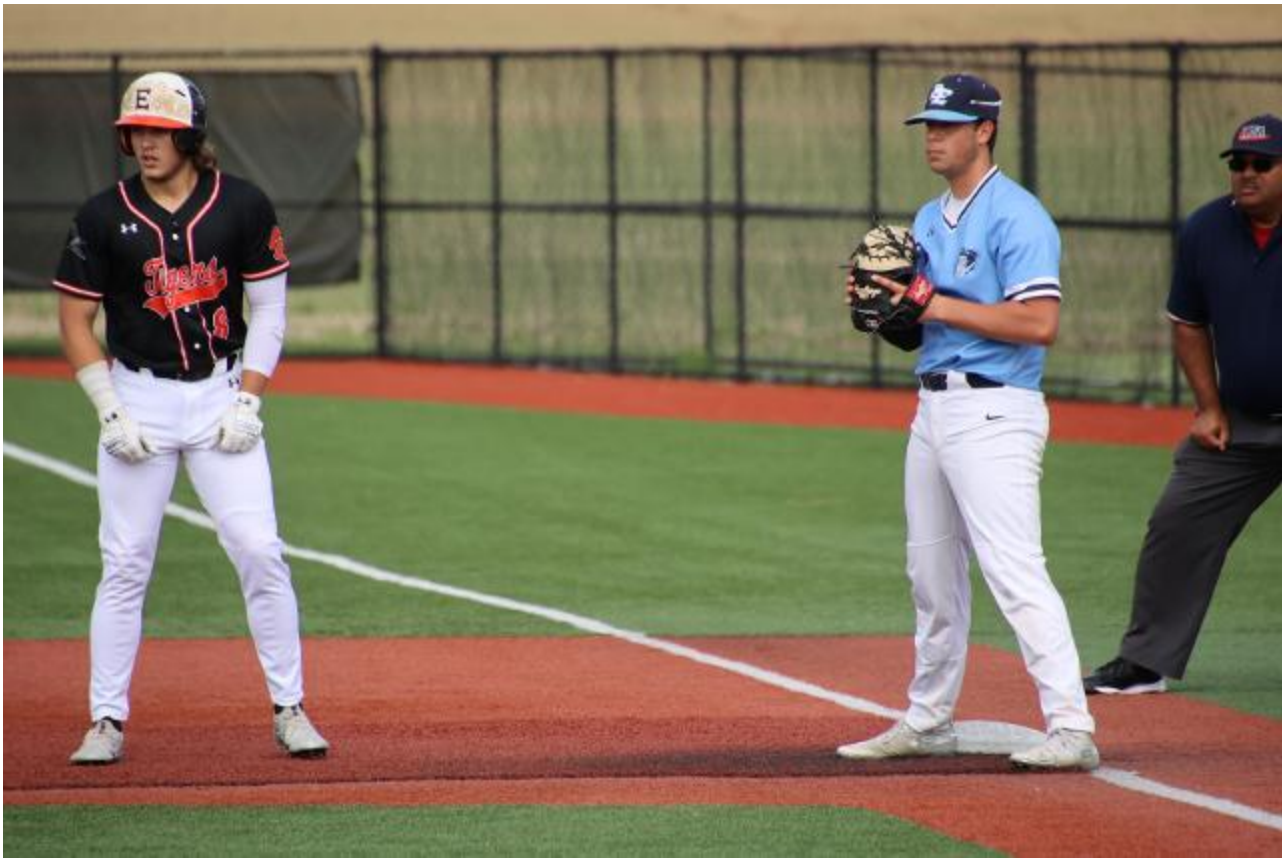
In that loss on May 3, the Tigers faced East's ace Zander Mueth. He threw three and a third innings only allowing a hit and picking up five strikeouts. Kannon Walker threw relief as the two combined to only allow three hits for the Tigers.



"We have great respect for Zander and Belleville East too," Edwardsville head coach Tim Funkhouser said about his opposition.

This time was totally different. Mueth allowed eight hits and five runs through three innings. Altogether Edwardsville out-hit Belleville East 15-2.

Mueth ran his pitch count all the way up to 29 pitches after just the first inning. That's when Edwardsville first got on the board.



Grant Huebner hit a leadoff single then Spencer Stearns stepped up to the plate. His extra-base hit scored Huebner to make it 1-0. It was Huebner's only hit of the game while Stearns went 2-4.

Stearns had more important things to worry about, like pitching. He threw all six innings for Edwardsville picking up 10 strikeouts while only allowing a couple of hits. He earned his tenth win of the season.



Meanwhile, the Tigers started piling the runs in.

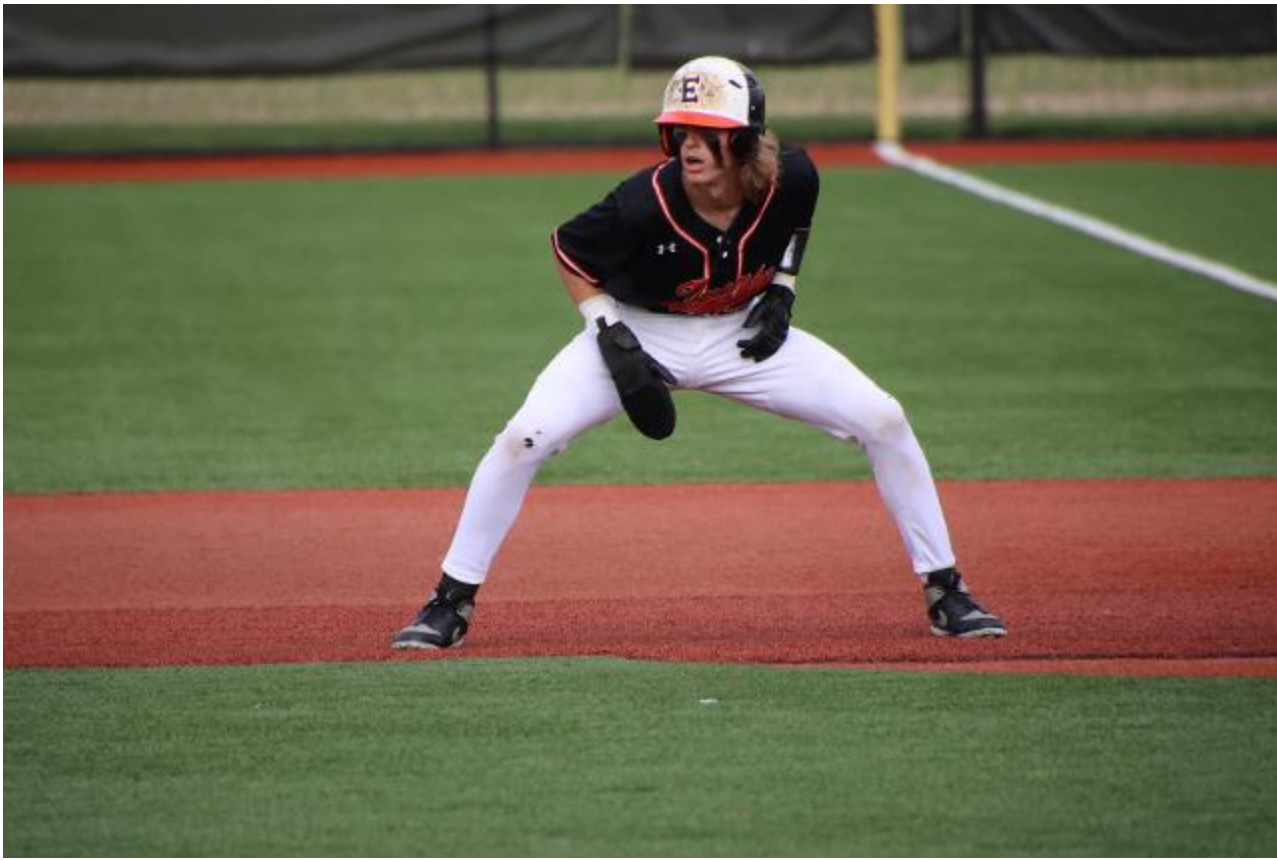
It started with a four-run bottom of the third. Stearns hit another leadoff single then Riley Iffrig followed suit. Caleb Copeland hit an RBI single and reached second after a wild throw to first. That made it 2-0.

Cade Hardy went 3-4 on the day with five RBI's but struck out his first at bat. His next AB though he hit an inside-the-park home run scoring Iffrig and Copeland. It was 5-0 after three innings.

"I put a swing on the ball, and I made good contact and luckily it got past the center fielder and I kept running," Hardy said postgame about the hit.

"To be able to score some runs early in the game I thought was huge for us. Really just throughout the game, we executed throughout the order," coach Funkhouser added.

Stearns had a 1-2-3 inning and the Tigers were back up to bat for the bottom half of the fourth. At this point, Mueth was done for the day bringing in a new arm, Owen Kelly.



This time Iffrig hit a leadoff single then Copeland got walked. With runners on first and second, Hardy came back up to the plate. He hit a bases-clearing triple to make it 7-0.

Jacoby Roberson singled and got all the way around to third after a wild throw to first. Hardy scored on the play. Cole Funkhouser doubled to score Roberson and make it 9-0.

The Tigers scored their final run in the bottom of the sixth to walk things off.

Hardy singled and moved to second after a lineout. Funkhouser hit an RBI single scoring Hardy and ending the game at 10-0. Funkhouser ended the day 2-3 with two RBI's. Hardy also finished the day with three runs.

The Tigers have scored a combined 39 runs in their last three postseason games while only allowing seven. They'll be riding a five-game winning streak into their next game.

Edwardsville will move on to the Sectional Championship game at 11 a.m. on Saturday, June 4. They will take on the winner between Minooka and Moline at Illinois Wesleyan University.

