

Epenesa propels Tigers past Granite City with 17-point effort

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
February 14 2015 12:45 AM



Edwardsville steadily built up a lead Friday night throughout a game with Granite City and behind a 17-point effort from AJ Epenesa, scored a 51-33 win over Granite at Lucco-Jackson Gym.

The Tigers went to 15-8 overall and 6-4 in the SWC with the win, while the Warriors fell to 12-11 overall, 0-10 in the league.

“We played pretty well tonight,” said Tiger coach Mike Waldo. “Jordan Harris played really well guarding (Granite City's Kenny Berry); we guarded and tried to take away what he can do, and our help defense did the job well.

“We played pretty smart and played hard, did a good job with our spacing and our passing. They're a really hard team to defend against, but we contested a lot of their shots.”

The Warriors' shooting was a problem; they had trouble finding the range much of the night. “Our defense was good in the first half,” Granite City coach Steve Roustio said, “and we had some good open shots as well, but we couldn't make them.

“When you can't make shots, it puts stress on your defense to get a stop and get back down court to score. Our shooting wasn't good tonight. We played good defense but we missed some easy shots.”

The Tigers also shut down Berry, who has been the Warriors' top scorer, and Granite couldn't find an answer for it. “We've got to get guys responding when teams key on Kenny,” Roustio said. “If we can get other guys going, things will open up for him.”

Granite opened up with the first points of the game, a long two-point shot from Darrell Miller, and took a 5-3 lead when Berry connected from behind the arc. That would be the last lead the Warriors would see as the Tigers went on a 14-point run spanning two periods before Berry broke the dry spell three-and-a-half minutes into the second term.

From that point, the Tigers steadily took control, pounding the ball to Epenesa inside and also letting their three-point shooters, namely Oliver Stephen, fire from outside. The Tigers took a 15-5 quarter-time and 21-11 halftime lead and were firmly in control.

The issue was all but decided in the third term, when Edwardsville got big buckets from Epenesa and Stephen, as well as Harris and Mark Smith, to pull away from the Warriors. Granite City tried to make a run at Edwardsville in the final term, but the Tigers kept coming up with the answers every time

In addition to Epenesa, Stephen ended with 11 points and Smith had eight. Miller led the Warriors with 11 points, with Berry and Rheem Beckwith adding eight points each

The Tigers finish out the home portion of the schedule with games Tuesday against Collinsville and Alton Friday.





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