

Edwardsville hockey team captures 20th win and moves to 2A Final

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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EAST ALTON – In the end, Edwardsville's hockey team won its' 20th straight game of the season and moved on to the Mississippi Valley Club Hockey Association Class 2A Final.

The win didn't come easy, though.

Watch the game video below:

Alton roared back from 5-2 down in the third period to pull to within 5-4 of the Tigers, then seemingly tied the game in the dying seconds, only to see the goal disallowed when the net was knocked off its' moorings before the puck crossed the goal line.

The Redbirds tried to get a shot off in the final frantic seconds but couldn't, giving the Tigers a dramatic 5-4 win and a two-game sweep of their MVCHA Class 2A North Division Final series at East Alton Ice Arena.

Edwardsville will play the South Division champion, either Triad or O'Fallon, in the Class 2A Final starting Tuesday at East Alton; the Knight-Panther series will play its deciding game Monday night in Granite City.

“This game was different from any other game we've played with them,” said Redbird coach Abram Henson. “We played with them and I'm really proud of them. We played our best game and that's all you can ask.”

“Give them credit, they battled us right to the end,” said Tiger coach Jason Walker. “We made too many mistakes with the puck, but we had guys step up to make plays when we needed them.”

The game may have turned when the Redbirds couldn't score on a five-minute power play after Blake Thomlinson was given a major penalty for checking from behind and an automatic game misconduct early in the second period. A series of subsequent penalties left the Redbirds first with a four-on-three advantage and later a two-man advantage.

“That was huge for them,” Walker said. “There's a part of every game where the special teams will play a role, and it did tonight.”

“It was really intense out there,” Henson said. “That's how it goes though.”

Unlike Game 1, however, Alton got on the board first when Jake Cunningham slipped a shot past Tiger goalie Justin Nossner at 3:17 of the first period. That seemed to wake up the Tigers, who tied the game just 29 seconds later when Colin Kelsey, with help from Tyler Schaffer, scored. A bit more than a minute later, Cody Farmer gave Edwardsville the lead on a slapshot from just inside the blue line that got past Redbird goalie Mitch Klug, Cole Krebs assisting.

A series of penalties gave the Redbirds a power play late in the period, and they capitalized when Brendan Lowe tied the game with 1:29 left off a feed from Kain Henson, tying the game 2-2 after the first 13 minutes.

Then came the second-period sequence where Alton failed to score despite having a five-minute power play and a series of penalties that left them, at one point, with a five-on-three advantage. The Tigers were equal to the challenge, and then took the lead in the late going when Jake Aurelio, with an assist from Carson Lewis, scored on the power play at 10:24 to take a 3-2 lead.

Christian Trevino, on an assist from Nick Austin at 33 seconds, and Schaeffer unassisted at 1:56, seemingly put the game away early in the third period. Someone didn't tell the Redbirds, though, who made it 5-3 at 2:34 when Scotty Waldrup, with help from Henson, beat Nosser at 2:34, then pulled to 5-4 with 3:55 to go when Christian Shank, on assists from Henson and Jake Bohn, scored to set up the dramatic finish.

The Redbirds had pulled Klug for an extra attacker when Brendan Rafferty was called for tripping with 25 seconds to go, giving Alton a power play with six skaters. With 2.5 seconds left, Alton had seemingly tied the game, which would have forced a shootout, in a mad scramble in front of goal, but the officials immediately disallowed the goal. The clock was reset to four seconds, but Alton could not get a shot off.

The Redbirds had the advantage on shots, 38-20, with Klug making 15 saves while Nosser turned back 34 shots for Edwardsville. The Redbirds were 1-for-6 on the power play, while the Tigers were 1-for-5.

[Alton Vs. Edwardsville MVCHA Hockey Video](#)



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