

# Edwardsville thumps Pekin to win girls regional

by John Hough, Sports Writer  
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The Edwardsville Tigers powered their way past the Pekin Dragons 69-41 in the IHSA Class 4A Alton Regional championship on Friday. It was the Lady Tigers' 12<sup>th</sup> straight regional crown. The win also means that Edwardsville is still undefeated at 28-0.

"I thought we rebounded well, got some stops at key times, and just did a great job overall," Edwardsville head coach Lori Blade said.

Freshman Rachael Pranger scored a game high 25 points and snagged 12 rebounds.

“She has that and I’ll say that you have to finish more,” Blade said with a laugh. “She had a big game.”

Sophomore Makenzie Silvey added 16 points.

It wasn’t always smooth sailing for the Lady Tigers.

“It was hard because can shoot and she can put it on the floor, she’s hard to guard. has good range and nice touch,” Blade said.

Pekin knocked down two triples, attacked the rim, and was knotted up with Edwardsville at 13 at the end of the first quarter. Edwardsville’s plan of attack was to get the ball down low primarily to Pranger or crash the boards and get second-chance points.

Early in the second quarter, the score was tied at 16, but the Tigers would go on an 11-0 run that burst open the game. On defense Edwardsville bossed the paint as Pranger and Criste’on Waters got several blocks.

“Tonight was a good team defensive night,” Blade said. “We were ready to rotate and rotated off on some screens, contested shots at times, and that is what we’re going to have to continue to do.”

Pekin stopped the bleeding late in the quarter and got the score to within nine points, but it would be the closest they would get to Edwardsville. The Tigers led 34-23 at halftime.

Midway in the third quarter, Edwardsville blew the game open when they went on a 13-0 run that got the lead up to 19 at 52-33. The Tigers’ guard play was excellent in terms of finding Pranger, Silvey, and Waters down low cutting to the basket. They also got out in transition and converted on contested layups. Edwardsville would expand the lead to as large as 29 points in the fourth quarter.

The Tigers will take on Belleville West (25-5) in the IHSA Class 4A Pekin Sectional semifinals at 7 p.m. Tuesday; the game will be played at Granite City. Edwardsville defeated the Maroons this season 63-31 and then 60-53 in overtime, which is West’s last loss.

“We’ll have to rebound well and take advantage inside and I would anticipate them doing something a little different than the first two games,” Blade said. “We’ve got to take care of the ball with their pressure and speed and be able to board.”



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