

# **Martin Feels Tigers Showed Grit, Fight, Effort In Season-Opening Win At Jackson, Faces Experienced Highland In Home Opener**

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer  
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EDWARDSVILLE - The Edwardsville High football team showed great determination and fighting spirit as the Tigers came from 20-0 and 26-14 down to force overtime and eventually defeat Jackson, Mo., a traditional power in southeast Missouri, 41-34 in double overtime on Friday night at The Pit in Jackson.

Although the Tigers trailed most of the game, the team didn't quit and kept plugging away, eventually tying the game with 2:51 remaining in regulation on an 18-yard touchdown pass from Jake Curry to Joey DeMare, then after exchanging touchdowns and two-point conversions in the first overtime, won on a four-yard run by De'Shawn Larson in the second overtime, then clinched the win on an interception on fourth down by Jaiden Vonner.

"They showed grit, they kept fighting, they were physical and gave a great effort," said Edwardsville head coach Matt Martin on his player's performance. "We played hard, but we weren't necessarily playing smart. Either team could have won and we're grateful that we did."

Jackson's football tradition is steeped in southeast Missouri, enjoying tremendous support from the community and the season opener was well attended by many of the Indians' supporters.

"I'll tell you what, the community of Jackson really gets behind their program," Martin said. "It was a tremendous atmosphere. They must have had 5,000 people there."

The Tigers broke two of Jackson's streaks with their win: A 39-game home winning streak for the Indians and a 31-game regular season winning streak. But those streaks were the least of Martin's concerns.

"Like I told some other people, I really didn't care about the streak," Martin said. "We were just trying to play good football."

The Tigers now face another big challenge in Highland, who come calling to Tiger Stadium on Friday for Edwardsville's home opener, with the kickoff coming at 7 p.m. The Tigers defeated the Bulldogs last season at Highland's stadium 41-33 and Highland is a very experienced, senior-laden team who defeated Washington in their opener last week on the road 54-10.

"Highland is senior-dominated and they've played a lot of varsity ball," Martin said. "They have a lot of experience and coach (Jim) Warnecke and his staff do a tremendous job."