

Pranger explodes for 19 points; Edwardsville moves to sectional finals

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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Freshman Rachel Pranger rarely resembles a first-year high school player on the court and Tuesday night she exploded for 19 points to guide Edwardsville's Tigers to a 48-41 victory over Belleville West in a sectional game at Granite City.

Pranger also had eight rebounds in the contest. The Tigers had an all-around balanced team scoring effort with multiple players scoring eight points or above.

Edwardsville coach Lori Blade said Pranger has good range and continues to show it.

Pranger said she was excited to capture another win against Belleville West, a difficult opponent, and said she couldn't wait to face Rock Island on Thursday.

Edwardsville's girls (29-0) play in the Pekin Sectional championship against Rock Island (25-7) at 7 p.m. Thursday.

Blade said Belleville West was a senior-laden team which made it tough, but that her kids stepped up at different times during the game. The coach said her team came out strong with the early lead.

"We sure didn't put them away," she said after the start.

She said she expects another tough contest on Thursday night.

"Rock Island is good," she said. "We have a day to prepare. We have to play to win and we can't get stressed out."

Edwardsville slipped to a 9-0 lead on Tuesday and was ahead 10-2 after the first period. The Tigers led 20-14 at the half and 32-28 at the end of three quarters. Belleville West crept to within two points with less than 50 seconds remaining (43-41), but some clutch free throw shooting in the final minutes made the difference for the Tigers.

Criste'on Waters controlled the boards with 13 rebounds; she added eight points. Makenzie Silvey also contributed eight points. Amayha Dycus had nine points with several clutch free throws. Dycus had two free throws to make it 45-41 late in the game. Aaliyah Box had two points but had some key defensive plays and Kate Martin had two points for Edwardsville.

