

Edwardsville tops Triad 6-3 in playoff game; Hinterser has four goals

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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EAST ALTON – Triad's hockey team drew first blood against undefeated and untied Edwardsville in Game 1 of their best-of-three Mississippi Valley Club Hockey Association Class 2A Final Tuesday night.

The Tigers took the Knights' opening shot and, thanks to a four-goal, five-point performance from Tyler Hinterser, are now a game away from perfection as they took a 6-3 win Tuesday night at East Alton Ice Arena.

Game 2 of the series is set for 8:45 p.m. Thursday at East Alton; a third and deciding game would take place at 7:15 p.m. Monday.

Not that Edwardsville coach Jason Walker was thinking in terms of that.

“We've been known for getting off to fast starts, so for Triad to get the first goal in the first 15 seconds, that's not the start we wanted,” Walker said. “But we battled back and made enough plays to win the game.

“Going undefeated isn't anything we talk about; we just try to focus one game at a time. We just want to finish the series off on Thursday. Triad has a good team and they'll be ready to go, and so will we.”

That opening goal at 15 seconds of the first period came from Kyle Kowalski, who skated in and beat Tiger goalie Justin Nosser to shockingly give the Knights an early lead.

“We had a good plan going in and we knew what we needed to do,” said Knight coach Pat Culliberk. “We wanted to come out hard and strike first.”

The Knights had advanced to the final the night before when they eliminated O'Fallon 4-2; having to start the series so quickly was a difficult proposition. “We spent a lot of emotion last night,” Culliberk said, “and the kids played with a lot of heart. It's hard coming off that type of a game and have to start a new series right away.”

Regardless, the lift Triad got from the quick opening goal soon faded as the Tigers got untracked and tied the game at seven minutes in when Shaun Raftery beat Nathan Funk, with assists going to Hinterser and Cole Siefert. It remained tied until there was just 1:02 left, when Tyler Schaffer scored on an assist from Hinterser, and then Hinterser scored from Schaffer just 22 seconds later to put EHS up 3-1 through one period.

Just as suddenly, the Knights fought back and forged a tie when Joe Gruber scored past Nosser on assists from Michael Cortivo and Kyle Black at 3:10, then Blake Takmajian put a shot past Nosser at 4:45, prompting Walker to insert Brady Griffin between the pipes.

Play steadied from there until the 11:07 mark, when Hinterser fired a shot that eluded Funk, with an assist from Justin Warta, to give the Tigers the lead back, then Hinterser scored the final two goals of the game, both assisted by Schaeffer, at the nine-second mark and at 10:56 of the third period to seal the game.

“No doubt, Tyler was the best player on the ice tonight,” Walker said.

The Tigers outshot the Knights 35-28; both teams were 0-for-2 on the power play on the night.



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