

# **Brnfre Scores Three TDs, Curry Runs For One Score, Passes For Another As Edwardsville Tops Highland 31-28**

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EDWARDSVILLE - Junior receiver Kellen Brnfre scored three touchdowns, while quarterback Jake Curry ran for one and passed for another as Edwardsville won its home football opener over Highland 31-28 Friday night at Tiger Stadium.



The Tigers played a much better second half, and were able to hold off the Bulldogs to go 2-0 on the season.

"Much better second half," said Edwardsville head coach Matt Martin. "Much better second half. Really, the whole team. And really, offensively, it was the turnovers that were stopping us; we were hurting ourselves. We're going to have to improve our maturity to get better at that."

On the final drive that produced what proved to be Curry's clinching touchdown, Curry himself had some big runs that help set up the score.

"Yeah, he missed some reads where he should have kept it," Martin said, "but when he started running the ball like that, that's huge. That makes a defense defend 11 players."

Brnfre also played particularly well, having big plays, including his three touchdowns that helped the Tigers immensely.

"Kellen's special, played hard, played both ways," Martin said. "He did a great job for us."



The defense also had a big second half, making some key plays that helped keep Highland at bay.

"I was proud of them," Martin said. "They made some good adjustments, they're doing a better job getting lined up. I think we tackled better in the second half. We missed a lot of tackles on special teams and defense in the first half."

The Tigers were able to score on the first possession of the second half to take back the lead, and it was a big momentum switcher in the game.

"Huge," Martin said. "Talk about it. Like, bad things are happening, right? And we've got to change the momentum. We always talk about finishing drives and the kids did a good job of that."

De'Shawn Larson also made big contributions offensively, playing in place of Jordan Bush.

"Bush is out, Larson stepped up," Martin said. "He's been our starting outside linebacker; he had mainly an offensive role tonight and he did a great job."

The Bulldog defense helped in giving Highland a halftime lead, scoring a late touchdown in the final minute.

"You know, just when you think that things are starting to slip away a little bit, they're making plays out there," Highland head coach Jim Warnecke said. "It's the second week in a row they're out there flying around, making plays and I was proud of them defensively. Obviously, we got schemed a little bit on some GT stuff upfront and we knew that was coming, we just didn't execute the way we wanted to. We lost one of our top defensive players early on in the game, Paul Graham. That didn't help things a little bit as well as far as taking away that GT from them."

The Bulldog defense did play well overall, but couldn't stop the big plays from Edwardsville.

"That's your fear when you play a bigger school," Warnecke said. "They've got more bodies, right? They've got more guys going just one way, they've got more speed. We really tried to bring a physical mindset in here tonight. We felt that's something we could bring to the party better than them."

Warnecke also had praise for the Tiger defense as well.

"Yeah, the defense is tough," Warnecke said. "That'll be the best team speed that we see on defense all year. They were doing a good job really getting the linebackers free for a good portion of the night. They took away a couple of our primary schemes early on and then I felt we found our way with our running game a little bit. We started hitting some ones, hitting some gainers, a good mix of a couple of those plays and the pass game, touchdowns were just breakdowns.

After forcing a three-and-out to start the game, the Tigers took the ball and got their first big play when Curry hit Brnfre on a 43-yard pass play that went to the Highland two, but penalties helped stall the drive. Tyler Dacus came on to kick a 31-yard field goal with 5:15 left in the opening quarter to give Edwardsville a 3-0 lead. After forcing another Highland punt, the Tigers scored on their next possession as Curry connected with Brnfre on a 45-yard touchdown pass late into the quarter to extend the lead to 10-0.

Highland got on the board in the second quarter to climax a 16-play, 80-yard drive that lasted 6:38 as Bulldog quarterback Brent Wuebbels and running back Travis Porter were able to get quality yardage, climaxing with a two-yard run up the middle by Porter to cut the lead to 10-7 after Joey Geromiller's conversion. The Tigers struck back immediately when Brnfre took the ball on an end-around and ran 57 yards for a touchdown, with Dacus' conversion making it 17-7 with 5:03 left in the first half.



The Bulldogs struck quickly twice late in the half, starting with a 23-yard touchdown pass from Wuebbels to Cade Altadonna, standing open in the end zone to pull Highland to within 17-14, then after recovering a fumble on the first play after the kickoff, Porter went in from one yard out, with Geromiller's convert giving the Bulldogs a 21-17 halftime lead.

Edwardsville took the second half kickoff and put together a great drive that culminated in a one-yard touchdown run by Brnfre with 9:04 left in the third quarter to give the Tigers back the lead at 24-21. In the fourth, Curry went on a keeper, got a great block from Joey DeMare and went in from 16 yards out to extend the lead back to 31-21 after the conversion. Highland came back late and got a 15-yard touchdown pass from Wuebbels to Altadonna with 4:40 left to cut the lead to 31-28, but the Tigers were able to run out the clock, getting a pair of key first downs from Brnfre and De'shawn Larson to give Edwardsville the win.

The Tigers are now 2-0 and plays at St. Louis Soldan next Saturday afternoon in a 12 noon kickoff, while the Bulldogs are 1-1 and premier their new turf field in their home opener against Marion next Friday at 7 p.m.







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