

# **Tigers Rally From Set Down, Defeat Lancers 21-25, 25-11, 25-22 To Keep Conference Winning Streak Alive**

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EDWARDSVILLE - The Edwardsville High girls volleyball team rallied from a set down to take a come-from-behind 21-25, 25-11, 25-22 win over a determined Belleville East team in a Southwestern Conference match played Tuesday evening at Lucco-Jackson Gym.

The Lancers took the first set, rallying from being 9-5 down to take the lead in the match, only to see the Tigers come up with a big effort in the second set to tie things up, then Edwardsville held off a late East rally to win the third set and the match.

"Better that we pulled on the win," said Tigers head coach Heather Ohlau when asked about her feelings after the match. "Our serve-receive picked it up in the second and third sets, which allowed us to be able to run our offense a little bit better. But we've still got some work to do. This match kind of showed some area of improvement that we still need to make this early in the season."

After not playing not so well in the opening set, Edwardsville showed much improvement in the final two sets to gain the win to extend their SWC winning streak alive, now having won 55 straight.

"Yeah, I think the leadership of our players just showed," Ohlau said, "that it's now or never. We need to start playing our game and our energy, just picking up our side and I think our second set showed that."

The Tigers had been in one three-set match this season, winning over Breese Central over the weekend in the Tiger Classic, and the experience definitely helped in the win over the Lancers.

"No and I think that's nice early on in the season," Ohlau said, "just being able to see that we can compete and maintain and keep composure through a third set, because I think coming down to it, it's going to be that perseverance that's going to make the difference in the postseason."

East played a hard-fought match all the way through and proved to be a very resilient team that will play hard and give their opponents much difficulty during their matches.

"Absolutely," Ohlau said. "Their defense was picking up everything. Their serve-receive was allowing them to run a pretty quick offense. And so, that was our goal, to try to knock them out of their offense, which, I think, in the second and third set, we were able to do more of."

Ohlau was very pleased with the way her team kept battling and striving throughout the match.

"Yeah, anytime your team can push through a tough match and come out on top," Ohlau said, "I think just shows the determination that they have."

The Tigers opened the match by scoring the first three points and four of the first seven points to go up 4-3 before the Lancers came back to tie the set at 5-5. With Sara Gouy serving, Edwardsville went on the first big move of the match, using a combined block from both Addie Reader and Vyla Hupp, a kill and an East violation to take a 9-5 lead. A pair of exchanges brought the score to 12-10 for the Tigers, then to 14-12, after which the service of Layla Pelly gave the Lancers their first lead at 16-14. East scored three of the next four points to go ahead 19-15, forcing an Edwardsville time out, after which East went pushed their lead to 23-18, thanks to the efforts of Pelly and Reece Gray, who combined on a block and after a Pelly kill brought the Lancers to 24-19, the Tigers did get to within 24-21, but a serve that went long gave East a 25-21 win and the first set.

Edwardsville started the second set off well, scoring the first four points of the set as Ava Waltenberger made a save that got in to give the Tigers their fourth point. A few exchanges gave Edwardsville an 11-7 advantage before Hupp served up seven points in a row, highlighted by a Waltenberger kill to make it 18-7, after which Pelly got the ball back for the Lancers at 18-8. The Tigers went on to score seven of the last 10 points in the set to take a 25-11 lead and square the match at 1-1.

The third and deciding set started off with an exchange that made the score 4-4 before the Lancers took a 6-4 lead. The Tigers managed to draw level at 7-7 and after another exchange that brought the score to 11-10 for the Tigers, scored four straight to go in front 15-11. With Brianna Ossman serving, East came back to tie the set 16-16, forcing another Edwardsville time-out. After another exchange made it 19-19, Reader and Claire Dunivan combined on a nifty block and an unreturned serve gave Edwardsville a 22-19 lead. From there, the Tigers scored three of the set's final six points, with an unreturned serve from Megan Knobeloch giving the Tigers the 25-22 win and the match 2-1.

Hupp had eight kills for Edwardsville, while Waltenberger had seven, going along with two blocks, Hanna Matarelli had 11 digs, with Hupp having seven and Gouy six, Matarelli served up 11 points and four aces, with both Reader and Gouy coming up with six points each, with Gouy having 17 assists and Knobeloch nine.

The Tigers are now 6-1 on the season and will play in the Crossroads Classic this weekend in Effingham, which will feature some of the best teams in both the state and Midwest. Ohlau feels that the Tigers will be ready to go for the tournament.

"We get ready for the next stop," Ohlau said. "This coming weekend, we travel up to the Crossroads Classic, which is always a battle. There are some very competitive teams across Illinois and outside of the state that we need to get ready for."



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