

# **Tigers Defeat Redbirds In Football Rivalry To Improve To 5-1 On Season**

by Nathan Tucker

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ALTON - Friday night saw a gridiron rivalry renewed at Public School Stadium, where Alton hosted Edwardsville and the visiting Tigers captured this meeting, 51-6.

It didn't always look like a comfortable Edwardsville win, the first quarter saw both teams score touchdowns and the Tigers only led by an extra point. Jordan Bush had a short rushing touchdown about five minutes into the action, and the Redbirds answered with a 54-yard touchdown pitch and catch from quarterback Graham McAfoos to senior wideout Byron Stampley Jr.

The Alton score seemingly woke up the Edwardsville offense, which scored three touchdowns in the second quarter. Daion Gaston caught a 10-yard touchdown pass from Tiger quarterback Jake Curry, who had yet another solid game at the helm of the Edwardsville offense. His other TD pass of the quarter found his senior running back, De'Shawn Larson, along the sideline with plenty of running room, an over 70-yard touchdown connection that put the Tigers up 28-6.

A botched long snap on an attempted Redbird punt resulted in a safety, and the visitors took a 30-6 lead into halftime. After a close first quarter, Edwardsville simply never looked back on their way to an easy win.

Jordan Bush tacked on another short touchdown run to add to his season total, now at five following Friday's victory. Bush's second score brought on the backups for Edwardsville, who were equally capable of moving the football and did so twice in the fourth quarter.

Patrick Chism followed up a 117-yard performance against Belleville West with a score on a few carries in the fourth, and second-string QB Michael Hedge found Joey DeMare in the endzone for six, bringing the score to 51-6 with a few minutes to play.

Highly touted Tiger recruit Iose Epenesa made his presence felt in the football game, contributing a tackle for loss and a sack before coming out of the game late as Edwardsville was rotating their depth chart. Epenesa is a top-ten recruit nationwide in the 2025 class, and has been offered scholarships by numerous college programs, including Iowa, where his brother A.J. and father Eppy played for the Hawkeyes.

Alton running back Keith Gilchrese was banged up early in the evening, and couldn't find the space he's been able to find so often this season. The Redbirds dropped to 1-5 on the season. On the flip side, Edwardsville improves to 5-1.

Alton travels to the local powerhouse East St. Louis next weekend, October 7. Edwardsville plays their final home game of the season next week, as they host the Lancers from Belleville East.





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