

Allen Leads With 19 Points, Tillman Named Game's MVP With 13 Points As Edwardsville Bounces Back From Tough Defeats

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EDWARDSVILLE - Malik Allen led with 19 points, while A.J. Tillman was named the game's MVP with 13 points and Isayah Kloster added 11 as the three Edwardsville players in double figures as the Tigers dealt Mary Institute-Country Day its first loss of the season 55-50 in the Scott Credit Union Shootout at Lucco-Jackson Gym Saturday evening.

The Tigers bounced back from a pair of tough Southwestern Conference losses earlier this week, 45-43 to O'Fallon on Tuesday and 57-47 at Belleville East on Friday, and taking the win over the previously undefeated Rams is a huge step in the right direction.

"A huge win," said Edwardsville head coach Dustin Battas. "I'm so proud of our guys and so proud of our team. I think that shows our maturity competitively and how bad our guys want to win."

Although this was the only win of the week, Battas felt that the Tigers had a good week overall.

"Overall, we've had a good week," Battas said. "We had a chance to win those first two games and had to really battle tonight to beat an undefeated MICDS team. That's a good team and they're well-coached."

The entire starting five --- Allen, Tillman, Kloster, Jake Curry and Jonathan Stump --- all played well and got shoutouts from Battas.

"A.J., Malik, Isayah, Jonathan and Jake deserve some praise," Battas said, "because they played most of the game last night and came back tonight and competed, even when they were tired. A.J. was excellent down the stretch and Malik did some very intelligent things on defense to take some options away."

Tillman opened the game up for the Tigers with a three-point play and following an early exchange of baskets, Stump hit a three up top to give Edwardsville a 10-6 lead. Another three from Allen increased the lead to 15-8 after another exchange, and one last exchange of baskets left the Tigers ahead 20-15 after the first quarter.



Marcus Coleman and Jason Stokes hit back-to-back to open the second quarter for the Rams, cutting the lead to 20-19, but the Tigers, led by Curry and Allen, went on a 9-1 run to take a 29-21 edge. A three from Brin Lewis and a basket by Coleman put MICDS back to within 29-26 and another exchange of baskets make the score 31-28 for Edwardsville at halftime.

The Tigers increased the lead slightly to 36-30 at the start of the second half and after a Kloster basket made it 38-33, the Rams fought back and took the lead 41-38 on back-to-

back threes by Jayden Banks. A Curry free throw made the score 41-39 after three quarters.

An exchange of baskets at the start of the final quarter gave MICDS a 45-43 lead, with an Allen three putting the Tigers back on top 46-45. Another three from Banks tied the game again, this time at 50-50 with 1:58 left in regulation, but Curry hit a bank shot in the lane to make it 52-50 before the final minute and free throws from Allen and Tillman gave the Tigers their 55-50 win.

To go along with Allen, Tillman and Kloster, Stump hit for seven points and Curry had five points for Edwardsville. Banks led the Rams with 19 points, while Mason Swartz added 13 points, Coleman scored 11 points, Lewis had three points and Stokes had two points.

The Rams are now 4-1 on the season, while the Tigers improve to 3-4 and play at Cahokia Tuesday night, then hosts two St. Louis teams this week, playing St. Louis Metro in a make-up game from the original home opener Wednesday night, then meets Gateway STEM Friday night, with all games starting at 7:30 p.m.

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