

Allen Hits For Career High 23 Points, Tillman Adds 18 As Tigers Win Over Riverview Gardens 76-31, Now 6-5 Going Into MICDS Holiday Tournament

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - Malik Allen, after tying his career high in the last two games, scored 23 points for a new high, while A.J. Tillman added 18 points as Edwardsville defeated Riverview Gardens 76-31 in a non-conference basketball game played Monday night at Lucco-Jackson Gym.

It was the third home win in a row for the Tigers over a St. Louis-based school, but more importantly, improves Edwardsville to 6-5 on the season, going over the .500 mark going into their opener at the Mary Institute-Country Day Holiday Invitational against Parkway South Friday afternoon.

"The guys had a good game," said Tigers' head coach Dustin Battas. "We really guarded them well and executed a lot of things on offense. We got off to a really good start and I think our practice and preparation have been good."

The Tigers have prepared well and worked hard in their practice sessions and Battas believes that the team is starting to come together at precisely the right time.

"The guys are working really hard and enjoy playing with each other," Battas said. "We knew our schedule was really difficult early on and we've had some guys out due to injury, but we've just focused on getting better every day. And I think that improvement is starting to show."

The individual statistics and quarter scores against the Rams weren't available at press time, but the improvement in the team has indeed started to show and it's very important going into the MICDS tournament, which will feature very good competition and teams from the St. Louis area.

As usual, Battas has a very simplistic goal for the Tigers going into the tournament, as well as the post-Holiday schedule, which is top-heavy with Southwestern Conference games.

"Our goal is always improving and playing our best basketball by the end of the season," Battas said.

After the Tigers play the Patriots on Friday, they'll play either Clayton or Francis Howell at 10:30 a.m., if the Tigers lose, or 4:30 p.m., if Edwardsville wins, on Tuesday, Dec. 27, in either the consolation or championship bracket. The tournament will conclude with the final on Thursday, Dec. 29. Battas is looking ahead to playing in the MICDS Holiday Invitational.

"Hopefully, we'll have some games where we'll be competing against some good teams," Battas said, "and get ready for the bulk of the conference schedule."





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