

Tigers Capture Jersey Mid-Winter Classic Tournament Title With 58-44 Win Over Host Panthers

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
January 22 2023 12:35 PM





JERSEYVILLE - A.J. Tillman led with 17 points, while Isayah Kloster came up with nine points and both Malik Allen and Kris Crosby had eight points each in leading Edwardsville to a 58-44 win over Jersey, winning the Jersey Mid-Winter Classic tournament title on a tiebreak Friday night at Havens Gym,

The Tigers, along with Granite City and Cahokia, all finished the tournament with 2-1 records, while the host Panthers concluded at 0-3. Edwardsville won the title on the basis of fewest points allowed, conceding 138 points, with the Warriors allowing 154 points and the Comanches 184 points. In the first game of the evening, Cahokia won over Granite 59-52.

It was another very good effort on the part of the Tigers which helped make the difference against the Panthers.

"Our guys really tried hard, worked hard and beat a really good Jersey team," said Edwardsville head coach Dustin Battas. "Our guys practiced good yesterday and were able to have success."

Tillman, in addition to his 17 points, made many good plays during the game, as well as leading the team in scoring on the night.

"A.J. did a good job of taking care of the ball," Battas said, "and him and Malik led us in scoring. And both Johnnie (Robinson) and Kris (Crosby) played good, solid defense."

The win is the Tigers' fifth in the last six games, along with the 11th in the last 14 games to bring their record to 14-8, a very good run for the team. And with the stretch run of the season coming soon, it's very important for Edwardsville to enjoy its success and at the same time, continue to work hard and be at their best when it counts.

"We talked to our guys after the game about being able to enjoy the success that we've been having," Battas said, "and not to take it for granted. We really hope to be playing our best basketball at the end of the regular season and we're heading in the right direction."

The Tigers took an 11-10 lead over Jersey at the end of the first quarter, then went further ahead 25-19 at halftime and 40-25 after three quarters, with the Panthers winning the fourth quarter 19-18, but the Tigers coming out on top in the gam

In addition to Tillman's 17 points, Kloster's nine points and both Allen's and Crosby's eight points, Jake Curry came up with seven points, Robinson hit for five points, Iose Epenesa had three points and Jonathan Stump scored a single point.

Jax Brunaugh led the Panthers with 18 points, while Tanner Brunaugh added 13 points, both Logan Meisner and Francis Vogel hit for four points apiece, Ayden Kannallaken scored three points and Easton Heafner had two points.

Jersey is now 12-9 after the tournament and return to regular season play next Friday at home against Highland at 7:30 p.m., then play at Pittsfield Jan. 28 at 4 p.m., and finish January at Mt. Vernon on Jan. 31 in a 5 p.m. tip.

The Tigers take their 14-8 mark into a Southwestern Conference tilt next Friday at O'Fallon in a 7:30 p.m. start, then play at Lutheran St. Charles Jan. 30 in a 5 p.m. start and return home Feb. 3 against Belleville East in a 7:30 p.m. tip.



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