

# Lady Tigers Play Tough O'Fallon Girls Squad Close Until Final Quarter

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EDWARDSVILLE - Shannon Dowell helped O'Fallon scored 20 points and helped O'Fallon take control in the final part of the game as the Panthers outscored Edwardsville in the fourth quarter 12-5 to take a 37-22 win over the Tigers in a Southwestern Conference girls basketball game Tuesday night at Lucco-Jackson Gym.

The Tigers did play well and had many opportunities, but a cold shooting night was perhaps the biggest factor in the game.

"During the first half, we kept it close," said Edwardsville head coach Caty Happe. "Our zone was exactly what we wanted to do. We had opportunities in the first and second half, where we had open shots and it was like we were hesitant to take them. So, we knew once we went in that zone in the fourth quarter, we're here to win; we're not to keep it close. If we wanted to keep it close, we would have let them pull the ball out. But we had to try to do something different and hopefully, we'll get another opportunity at them."

Halfway through the third quarter, the Tigers trailed 18-15 and were right where they wanted to be.

"Exactly what we wanted to do," Happe said. "This team is tired of moral victories. They're a great team over there; they've got great athletes, great basketball players. So, to be able to hold them down to 18 points in three quarters is awesome. We just didn't have quite enough."



The Tigers did everything right and played to their game plan well, but Happe and her team have had more of their share of moral victories and it's a matter of believing in themselves to get over the hump.

"I told them they've got to believe they can win every game," Happe said, "and we're getting different chances, but it's like we don't want to step up when the moment's there."

So, moral victories and showing them they can play with anybody. They can play with the Altons and O'Fallons, but it's just taking that next step. So just working on things we can move into practice and get that fourth quarter ready to go."

The Panthers also played well, taking control in the third quarter, then pulling away in the fourth after leading by an 18-15 score.

"We're feeling great," said O'Fallon head coach Nick Knollhoff. "We never take Edwardsville for granted and coming in and winning against them on their home floor is huge for our program and huge for our season. We saw it as a must-win to still give us a chance to possibly win the conference. Big game Thursday against Alton, but Edwardsville had a great game plan, they packed in the lane against us and we did not have a very well-shooting night. Then we got going in the second half and Shannon kind of took over there in the third quarter."

It was another big game for Dowell, who dropped 40 points against Civic Memorial in the Highland Invitational and is considered one of the St. Louis area's top players.

"She had a great tournament at Highland," Knollhoff said. "She scored 109 points in four games, averaging 26 a game. And you knew they were going to key on her; you could see whenever she touched at the high post and she looked to drive, they did take one charge on her. Their focal point was on her and they made other girls for us try to step up and win the game. But eventually, our defense is going to take over. When we held them to 19 points when I took my starters out with 53 seconds to go. Our defense can hold teams under 30, 40 points as well.

"Defense always wins games" Knollhoff continued, "and we have so much speed and athleticism, too. You've only got to score one more point than the other team, is what I keep telling them. So if they just can buy in, if shots aren't falling, there's nothing you can do about it. But you can always control your attitude and your effort when you're on defense."

Dowell and Ma'Chilah Vinson scored the game's first seven points to put the Panthers up early, with Emerson Weller getting the Tigers' first basket late in the period to give O'Fallon a 7-2 lead after one quarter. After an exchange of baskets to start the second quarter, Ellie Neath, playing her first game since returning from injury, scored to cut the Panthers lead to 9-6, with a basket from Ashlyn Hauk and a free throw from Weller allowed Edwardsville to tie the game at 9-9. O'Fallon went on a 7-1 run to end the first half, as D'Myjah Bolds scored, Dowell sank a three and Laylah Jackson nailed another three to give the Panthers a 16-10 halftime lead.



Kaitlyn Morningstar hit three of four free throws, while Weller scored from inside to open the second half for the Tigers, cutting the lead to 16-15 before a Bolds basket gave the Panthers an 18-15 lead. After an O'Fallon time-out, the Panthers then started to take control, as Dowell scored, then hit a three, with Bolds scoring again on a 7-2 run to give O'Fallon a 25-17 lead after three. In the fourth, O'Fallon scored six of the period's first eight points to go ahead 31-19 and from there, Dowell and Bolds combined to score six points in a row to give the Panthers a 37-19 lead. The Tigers scored the game's final five points to make the final 37-22.

Dowell led O'Fallon with 20 points, while Bolds added 16 points, Jackson scored five points and Jailah Pelly had two points. Weller led the Tigers with eight points, while Hauk hit for four points, Morningstar scored three points, Layne Logan, Blakely Hockett and Neath all scored two points and Molly Peel scored a single point.





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