

# Weller Leads Edwardsville With 14 Points In 42-34 Win Over Civic Memorial Girls

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EDWARDSVILLE - Civic Memorial opened the game with an 11-0 run to take the early lead, but Edwardsville kept chipping away and in the fourth quarter, went on a 16-2 run to take a 42-34 win over the Eagles in a key non-conference game played Saturday evening at Lucco-Jackson Gym.

Despite the early deficit, the Tigers kept plugging away at the lead and were able to go ahead on an Emerson Weller basket early in the fourth quarter, giving Edwardsville the lead for the first time and it was a lead the Tigers wouldn't relinquish.

"Our kids battled the whole game," said Edwardsville head coach Caty Happe, "and they hit a ton of shots in that first quarter, that their role kids stepped up and hit. That was great for them, but I just told them to stick to the plan. We were getting outhustled on boards, they were getting second chance opportunities and I thought down the stretch, we did a really good job of battling back and a little bit at a time."

Once the Tigers captured the lead, they didn't let go and it produced perhaps the biggest win of the season for Edwardsville.

"Yeah, it's great for us," Happe said, "especially moving into the last part of conference and we hit some free throws down the stretch and really held their best player to limited points, which is awesome."

Happe also tipped her hat to CM, who have had their troubles this season, but are still a contender in Class 3A and will be a team to be reckoned with when the IHSA playoffs start.

"For sure," Happe said. "They're a great 3A team and they're going to do really well in the postseason. So this game's great for both communities in terms of we're just preparing ourselves for later on."

The Tigers kept steadily coming back from the deficits and finally broke through, which was a feather in the Edwardsville caps, never giving up or surrendering.

"CM pressured us and I thought we did a better job in taking care of this game of taking care of the basketball," Happe said. "So just improving each game and getting ready for the postseason."



The Eagles played well for the first three quarters, but in the fourth quarter, didn't execute well and allowed the Tigers back into the game, which Edwardsville eventually took control of in going on to the win.

"Not good," said CM head coach Mike Arbuthnot. "I mean, like, we didn't obviously execute in the fourth quarter, everything went wrong, we lacked leadership on the floor,



we missed monies, we missed lay-ups and we just basically gave it to them in the fourth quarter. I thought we played pretty hard and pretty well in the first three quarters, got a really bad possession at the end of the third quarter that killed us. We didn't execute correctly and gave them a wide-open three at the end and it just snowballed from there in the fourth quarter.

"Disappointed in our effort in the fourth quarter," Arbuthnot continued, "disappointed in our lack of execution in the fourth quarter."

Although things went awry in the final quarter, the Eagles are still working hard and hanging in, but critical mistakes at inopportune times have hurt CM much this season.

"Yeah, we're working hard," Arbuthnot said, "we're just finding ways. We're taking bad shots at crucial times, we have a seven-, eight-point lead, we're chucking up three-point shots, a couple of our players are shooting 20 percent from the three-point line and our decision-making is not what this program is about. We've got to do a better job of executing and understanding what our roles are."

Although it hasn't been a great regular season for CM, the Eagles are still hoping to make hay and do well when the postseason gets underway.

"Yeah, no doubt," Arbuthnot said. "It's been a tough season. We've dealt with everything, but there are still two weeks to go before the postseason, I hope we can get a lot of this stuff cleaned up, and going into the postseason, we'll see where we're at. We'll see if the kids still want to keep playing or if they want to go to their spring sports."

And once the Eagles do get things cleaned up, there's the chance that CM could go a long way again in the postseason, where they finished fourth in the state.

"Well, everyone hopes that," Arbuthnot said. "You know, you've got to have a lot of things go your way, but this group's very capable of doing it. But we need to make big strides in these next two weeks."

After an early time out by CM to get things organized, the Eagles started off on their 11-0 run, with Avari Combes and Marlee Durbin hitting back-to-back threes, a basket from Avery Huddleston and another three by Durbin. forcing an Edwardsville time-out. After the time out, the Tigers went on an 8-0 run, with Weller scoring the first four points, then Zay Hoover and Kaitlyn Morningstar both scored to cut the CM lead to 11-8, with Combes banking home a three at the buzzer to give the Eagles a 14-8 lead after one quarter.

The Tigers were able to get the CM lead down to 15-12 at the start of the second quarter, but a 6-0 Eagle run, led by both Marlee and Olivia Durbin, gave CM a 21-12 lead. A three ball from Hoover sparked another Tiger comeback, where Ashlyn Hauk, Morningstar and Weller all scored to tie the game at 21-21, but a basket before the buzzer by Huddleston gave the Eagles a 23-21 lead at halftime.

Combes hit another three at the start of the third to extend the Eagles' lead to 26-21 and after an exchange of baskets, Olivia Durbin scored twice to extend the lead to 32-23. Ellie Neath hit a three at the buzzer to cut the lead to 32-26 at three-quarter time and it was the spark the Tigers needed.

Huddleston drove the lane at the start of the fourth quarter to give the Eagles a 34-26 lead, but as it turned out, it would be the last points scored by CM, as Edwardsville began to take control. Baskets by Hoover and Weller cut the lead to 34-30, with free throws by Blakely Hockett and Hoover cutting the lead to 34-33. Weller drove the lane to score, giving the Tigers a 35-34 lead and a basket by Morningstar increasing the advantage to 37-34 with nearly two minutes left. From there, Edwardsville scored the final five points off the game to win 42-34.

Weller led the Tigers with 14 points, while Hoover scored 11 points, Morningstar added nine points, Hockett came up with seven points, Neath had three points and Hauk scored two points. Marlee Durbin led the Eagles with 10 points, while Combes scored nine points, Huddleston hit for seven points, Olivia Durbin scored four points and Meredith Brueckner scored two points.

The Eagles are now 13-14 on the year and play three of their final four regular season games at home, hosting Waterloo Thursday night at 7:30 p.m, then travel to Quincy Notre Dame Catholic Feb. 6 in a 6:30 p.m. start, then host Breese Mater Dei Catholic on Feb. 7 and Highland Feb. 9 to finish the regular season, both games starting at 7:30 p.m.

The Tigers are now 11-12 and finish up their current home stand with games on Tuesday against Collinsville and East St. Louis on Thursday, play at Granite City Feb. 3, and end the regular season at home Feb. 7 against St. Louis Lutheran North and at Belleville West Feb. 9. All games start at 7:30 p.m.



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