

Morningstar Leads With 16, Weller Adds 11, Edwardsville Girls Basketball Team Reaches Break-Even Point With 48-39 Win

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - Kaitlyn Morningstar led Edwardsville with 16 points, while Emerson Weller came up with 11 points to help the Tigers to a 48-39 win over Collinsville in a Southwestern Conference girls basketball game Tuesday night at Lucco-Jackson Gym.

The win was very significant for the Tigers, as it upped its record to 12-12, marking the first time this season that Edwardsville reached the .500 mark, producing a great feeling all around the team.

"We've had a really tough schedule, so to get back to where we are now is fantastic," Edwardsville head girls basketball coach Caty Happe said. "It's just a tribute to how hard the girls have been working."

The Kahoks didn't make it easy for Edwardsville, though, as Collinsville played hard and scrappy throughout the game, coming up with some runs to come close. The Tigers, however, had the answers for each run to keep Collinsville at bay.

"They came back and really hit some good shots," Happe said, "but we had the answers each time."

Both Morningstar and Weller played well and produced very good minutes for Edwardsville, coming up with key points at critical times.

"We had some good minutes all around," Happe said, "and Kaitlyn and Emerson rebounded well and it gave them great second chance opportunities."



The most important takeaway from the game is the Tigers leveling their record and starting to play their best basketball of the season at the right time, with the IHSA Class 4A playoffs coming right around the corner.

"It is," Happe said. "Hopefully, it's coming together at the right time and we can put it together in the postseason."

Megan Janson started the game off with a three to put Collinsville ahead, but Weller and Morningstar put together baskets to give the Tigers its first lead at 4-3. After an exchange of baskets, both Weller and Blakely Hockett hit an inside shot to give Edwardsville a 10-5 lead after the first quarter.

Janson hit a pair of free throws to cut the lead to 10-7 in opening the second quarter, with the Tigers countering at 12-9 with a 7-0 run, fueled by Weller and Morningstar and

climaxed with a three from Ellie Neath to make it 19-9. Katie Bardwell ended the run with a basket, with the Kahoks outscoring the Tigers 7-5 the rest of the quarter, with Janson hitting one of three free throws after the buzzer to give Edwardsville a 24-16 lead at halftime.

In the third quarter, the Tigers opened up an 11-point lead at 31-20 on another three by Neath, with a free throw by Elliana Rhinehart, a three from Janson and a Rhinehart basket cutting the lead to 31-26, Weller and Ashlyn Hauk countered with baskets, with Hauk hitting in the lane to make the score 37-25 after three quarters.

Janson hit a three to start the fourth quarter to spark a 9-2 run for the Kahoks, coming to within 39-34. Four straight points by Morningstar put the lead back to nine, but a three by Janson and a basket by Talesha Gilmore put the Kahoks back to within 43-39. The Tigers scored the final five points, led by Morningstar, to give Edwardsville the 48-39 win.

To go along with Morningstar's 16 points and Weller's 11, both Hockett and Neath hit for six points each, Zay Hoover scored five points and Hauk added four points. The Kahoks were led by Janson's 17 points, while Jenna Scheller added six points, Lily Carlisle had five points, Rhinehart scored three points and Ella Guerrero, Bardwell and Danajah Willis all had two points each.

The Tigers are now 12-12 and conclude their current home stand Thursday night against East St. Louis, then play at Granite City Friday night, host their annual Senior Night

game against St. Louis Lutheran North on Feb. 7 and conclude the regular season Feb. 9 at Belleville West. All games are set to tip-off at 7:30 p.m.



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