

Weller Leads With 23 Points, Hoover Adds 12 As Tigers Win Senior Night Game 58-28, Extends Streak To Six

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EDWARDSVILLE - Senior Emerson Weller led the way with 23 points, while sophomore Zay Hoover added 12 points as Edwardsville's girls basketball team celebrated its annual Senior Night with a 58-28 win over St. Louis Lutheran North Tuesday evening at Lucco-Jackson Gym.

In pregame ceremonies, the Tigers honored its five seniors - Weller, Ashlyn Hauk, Kaitlyn Morningstar, Ella Cook and Dallas Jenkins - and their families, thanking them for their contributions to the program and wishing them well in the future. The team then got to work, jumping out to an early lead and never looking back in taking the win over the Crusaders, extending their winning streak to six. [See related senior story here.](#)

After the game, Edwardsville head coach Caty Happe praised the seniors for their hard work and dedication to the program.



"It's always special. Especially for this group of five," Happe said. "And they've been so hardworking and had to wait their turn to really get some minutes in. They've really shown their development over these past four years."

The team was especially happy for Cook, who has missed the season due to a knee injury that has kept her out of action, and scored a fourth-quarter basket to set the Tigers' bench and crowd wild with delight.

"Yeah, I just think mentally too," Happe said of Cook, "knowing that she can get back out and do it, and her confidence. And it's hard; Emerson can tell you that, tearing an ACL and coming back from it. But just awesome to see her back out on the court tonight."

It was also Jenkins' first extended action after being out for a month, due to mononucleosis, and Happe was also happy for her.

"She does," Happe said. "So, she got a couple of minutes Friday, knowing that today was really the game that she really got to come back to. So she did a great job with her minutes, still getting her back into condition. But so awesome to see her back on the floor, too after battling."

Weller and Morningstar have been two of the key players on the Tigers this season and both have made major contributions to the Tigers' success going into the postseason.

"Yeah, Emerson and Kaitlyn both have done a great job on the boards," Happe said. "Emerson started off a little nervous, I think excited for the Senior Night, with the jitters and the atmosphere. But just great to see them all settle in."

The most important part of the game itself was that the Tigers are on a roll at the right time, going into the final regular season game and the IHSA Class 4A playoffs, which begin next week.

"Our goal at the end of the year is always to be playing our best basketball," Happe said. "So hopefully, each game, we're getting a little bit better and we're ready to start postseason Tuesday."

With the postseason about to start, everything changes and Happe is very confident about the Tigers' chances.

"Yes, it is for sure," Happe said with a smile. "So, doesn't matter about records or a winning streak here this next week. It's just about who's just going to put the best basketball on the floor."

The Tigers jumped out to a 13-5 lead after the first quarter and also led at halftime 22-15. Edwardsville started to put the game away in the third quarter, taking a 44-25 lead, then in the fourth, Weller scored four of the quarter's first six points to extend the lead to 50-25, after which Cook scored her first basket of the season, setting off the big celebration on the floor and bench for the Tigers. Lainey McFarlin scored with almost two minutes left to give Edwardsville 56-25 lead, triggering the running clock rule for the remainder of the game, and from there, the Tigers went on to their 58-28 win.

To go along with Weller's 23 points and Hoover's 12, Morningstar came up with six points, McFarlin scored five points, Hauk and Ellie Neath had three points each, and Cook, Jenkins, Blakely Hockett, and Molly Peel all scored two points apiece.

Darla Johnson and Raven Addison led the Crusaders with eight points each, while Kayla Sullivan scored five points, Skye Johnson had three points and Jalia Haywood had two points.

Lutheran North is now 9-11 for the year, while the Tigers are now 15-12 and play their final regular season game at Belleville West on Thursday at 7:30 p.m. Edwardsville opens the postseason next Tuesday night, playing the host Lancers in the Belleville West Regional at 7:30 p.m., with a win advancing them into the final on Feb. 16 against the winner of the semifinal between Belleville West and O'Fallon, with the tip-off coming at 7 p.m.