

# **Tigers' Football Head Coach Matt Martin Steps Down, Leaves Legacy With Vast Contributions**

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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**EDWARDSVILLE** - Edwardsville's head football coach Matt Martin announced today he has resigned from his position for next season "to move closer to family."

Coach Martin won his 100th game of his head coaching career on Sept. 3, 2021, when Edwardsville defeated Highland 41-33 at Highland. Coach Martin started as interim

head coach of the Tigers in 2010 and was appointed full-time for the 2011 season. Coach Martin has won 111 games in his head football coaching career at Edwardsville and Granite City.

Coach Martin leaves a legacy with Edwardsville, and his children were also exceptional athletes in the program. Some of his former players include present NFL players - defensive end A.J. Epenesa (Buffalo Bills), kicker Riley Patterson (Jacksonville Jaguars) and cornerback Craig James (New York Jets). Coach Martin's daughters Kennedy and Kate were both champion basketball and volleyball players at EHS and his son, Trevor, played basketball. Kate Martin has been a recent basketball standout for the University of Iowa women's basketball team.

He said what he enjoyed most about his time in Edwardsville was his ability to build lasting relationships, and he has enjoyed the people this region immensely.

"I hope we are leaving it better than we found it," he said of his time as the Edwardsville head football coach. "For me, the most important part of this has been the kids and coaches. I have been with many of the coaches for a long time. I have gone through the good and bad times with them and they have always been loyal."

Coach Martin is a Peoria native and played as a lineman in college at Western Illinois University in Macomb. He started his coaching career as an assistant at Harvard, Illinois, High, came as a teacher and assistant football coach at Edwardsville in 1993, then moved to a head coach position in Granite City in 2003. He returned to Edwardsville in 2010 as interim head football coach and became the full-time head coach in 2011 until today.

He has also coached the weights (shot put and discus) for Edwardsville, and A.J. Epenesa emerged as a state champion. Coach Martin's shot put and discus throwers have always been competitive with his emphasis on proper technique and training.

The Tigers football team qualified for the IHSA playoffs in all his seasons. The 2020 season was abbreviated because of COVID and moved to spring 2021.

Coach Martin did not make this decision without a lot of consideration.

"This is not an easy decision," he said. "Jill and I will now be around family a lot more. We missed a lot of birthday parties and Thanksgiving and things like that, now we will be around that more.

"I have nothing but fond memories of coaching at Edwardsville," he added. "Being a head coach is not easy, it takes a lot of time and energy. There is never a good time to

do this. I have a handful of kids who I really connected with and I will root for many of these kids from afar."

[Bradley Piros also contributed to this story.](#)