

Belleville West Has Four Players Score In Double Figures, Comes Up With Answers At Key Times To Give Edwardsville 57-45 Loss In Senior Night Game

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EDWARDSVILLE - Belleville West, led by Myles Liddell's 16 points, had four players score in double figures and used its speed and quickness to help hold off Edwardsville as the Maroons defeated the Tigers 57-45 in the Southwestern Conference and regular-season finale Friday night at Lucco-Jackson Gym.

It was Edwardsville's annual Senior Night game and in pregame ceremonies, the six senior players - Montrez West, Johnnie Robinson, Braylon Heavens, Isayah Kloster, Kody Moore and Jonathan Stump - and their families were recognized, saluted and thanked for their contributions to the program, along with the senior cheerleaders and dance team members. After the game, it was mentioned that now the regular season is over and the postseason is ready to begin, every team is now 0-0.

"Yeah, that's certainly not the way you want to end your season at home on Senior Night," said Edwardsville head coach Dustin Battas, "but it was a bad combination of things. They played really good, we had a lot of trouble making baskets and then, playing from behind, it's always hard. And we're pressing and trapping and that's why we gave up 21 points in the fourth quarter. And they made all their free throws and took care of the ball. So all is not lost. We're focused on the postseason; we wanted to win tonight and finish second place in the conference, but we're not going to let it discourage us from our bigger goal, which is win in postseason games."

It's still a top-three finish in the SWC, along with a 20-10 regular season record, both remarkable achievements given the questions about the Tigers going into the campaign. The Tigers are a team no one will want to play against come the start of the playoffs.

"Yeah, I hope our guys feel good about the work we've done, and I think they do," Battas said. "I do think we've surprised some people; I don't think we've surprised ourselves. Our guys worked really hard this summer and this fall in the weight room. I think we thought we were a capable bunch. So we're very satisfied with how this season has gone along and we're really proud of our guys and we're looking forward to competing in the regional."

Although the Tigers don't live and die by three-point shooting, Edwardsville went 2-of-16 from behind the arc and that hurt the Tigers during the game.

"Yeah, that's going to be really challenging for us to overcome," Battas said, "especially when you're playing from behind. We needed some of those threes, especially in the third and fourth quarter to go down, so you can catch up. And we spend a lot of time shooting, we just missed some and some of that is because of their speed and athleticism. But we're confident in Malik (Allen) and we're confident in some of our other guys that they can make them. But, it is going to be hard to win games if you shoot two-for-16. We'll keep working at that, but tonight was a bit of an anomaly; that hasn't been really our goal. So it's something we'll keep trying to improve on that, but it's not something we're super-focused on that's a negative.

The Maroons played very well from the start and it was a big win for West going into their postseason.

"Absolutely," said West head coach Alex Schobert. "This is a great win for us. Edwardsville's been playing phenomenal. Obviously, they're a well-coached team and I felt our kids just did a great job buying in tonight and executing the game plan."

The Maroons took an early lead, building upon it and never letting the Tigers back in, coming up with the answers each time Edwardsville tried to rally.

"I thought we did a good job attacking their pressure when they brought that press," Schobert said, "because we didn't want to settle necessarily or hold the ball. But on a big floor like this, I think we've got guys that can get to the rim and make plays and I thought we did a great job of doing that tonight, settling and also sharing the basketball, playing great team offensive basketball."

The Maroons did, indeed, have four players in double digits, which has been a trademark of the team all season.

"Absolutely," Schobert said. "That's what we've preached all season long is we don't necessarily have a guy that's going to get out and get 25, 30 points a game. But up and down the lineup, we've do believe we've got guys that can be in the 10 to 15 range every night, as long as we share the ball and play team basketball, we're going to be alright."

The Maroons scored three of the game's first four baskets to go ahead 6-2, as Brandon Scott, D'Quan Shaw and David Marshall, Jr. all scored, after which Kris Crosby connected on a three to make it 6-5. A free throe and a Jordan Lacey basket made the score 9-5 after the first quarter. The second quarter started with an exchange of baskets that had West ahead 11-10, with the Maroons ending the quarter on a 12-4 run, with Liddell scoring right before the buzzer to give West a 23-14 halftime lead.

Liddell hit on a pair of baskets and Scott canned a three to open the third quarter for the Maroons, making the score 30-14 and forcing an Edwardsville time out. with a A.J. Tillman three-point play cutting the lead to 30-17. The two teams then went the remainder of the third quarter tied 6-6 to give West a 36-23 lead after the period and it the fourth, the Maroon lead was between eight and 10 points as West had the answers for every attempted Edwardsville comeback. The Maroons also went nine-of-12 from the line down the stretch to help them to their 57-45 win.

To go along with Liddell's 16 points, West also had Marshall hit for 12 points, Scott scored 11 points, Jordan Lacey had 10 points and Daylen Byrd had eight points. The Tigers were led by Allen with 13 points, with Tillman adding nine points, Crosby scored five points and both Robinson and Kloster hit for four points each.

The Maroons finish the regular season 14-15 and go against O'Fallon in the Panthers' regional, while the Tigers meet Collinsville, a team Edwardsville had defeated Feb. 14 51-43, in the Quincy regional, with both games on Wednesday night, starting at 7:30 p.



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