



Wilkinson Leads All Scorers With 20 Points: Kahoks End Tigers Season With 71-56 Boys Regional Win

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QUINCY - Edwardsville's boys basketball team had a good start Wednesday night against Collinsville in the Class 4A IHSA Regional Semifinal at Quincy, but in the end, the Kahoks had too much firepower in a 71-56 win over the Tigers.

The Kahoks' Jake Wilkinson's 20 points were key, plus pinpoint free throw shooting, propelled Collinsville over Edwardsville on this night.

The Tigers did play very hard and well throughout, and had some good efforts, especially from senior Isayah Kloster and juniors A.J. Tillman and Malik Allen.

The loss ended a very good season for the Tigers, who won 20 games, including 14 of their final 19, and finished third in the Southwestern Conference behind champion O'Fallon and runner-up East St. Louis. But on this night, it wasn't meant to be as Collinsville took control in the third quarter and pulled steadily away to advance to Friday night's final.

"Tonight just wasn't our night," said Edwardsville head coach Dustin Battas. "We got off to a great start, and then, they hit a pair of tough threes in the third quarter and once they got the lead, they made their free throws. We would have liked to shoot more free throws; we had eight and they were able to take advantage of their free throws.

"We had some great individual efforts," Battas said, "but it was not our night."

It was also the final game for the team's six seniors - Kloster, Montrez West, Johnnie Robinson, Braylon Heavens, Kody Moore, and Jonathan Stump - and they will all be missed.

"We're really going to miss our six seniors," Battas said. "They're about the best group of guys you could ask for."

Nick Horras and Jamorie Wysinger started off the game for Collinsville by hitting three-of-four free throws to put the Kahoks up 3-0, but the Tigers scored six of the next eight points, led by Kloster, to go up 6-5. Moore then scored to make it eight-five before a pair of Kahok baskets made it 9-8, but three free throws by Kloster near the end of the quarter put the Tigers up 11-9 after one.

At the start of the second quarter, an Alec Marchetto three extended the Tiger lead to 14-9, but after an exchange of baskets, the Kahoks went on a 7-0 run as Horras, Zach Chambers, and Wilkinson all scored to put Collinsville up 18-16. An exchange of points brought the score to 20-18 before a pair of Tillman free throws tied the game at 20-20. The Kahoks then ended the half on a 5-0 run as Wysinger hit on a three and Chambers scored before the buzzer to put Collinsville ahead 25-20 at halftime.

Kloster scored at the start of the second half to cut the Kahok lead to 25-22, but from there, Collinsville started to take control as Wilkinson, Chambers, and Adam Rimar helped Collinsville to a 16-6 run in the third to go ahead 41-32 after three quarters. In the fourth quarter, after Collinsville scored twice to push the lead to 45-32, Kloster scored to make it 45-34 and a Crosby three got Edwardsville to within 47-37. The Tigers could come no closer though, as the Kahoks shot well at the line, hitting 19 free throws in the quarter to win going away 71-56.

Rimar had 14 points for the Kahoks, Wysinger scored 13 points, both Chambers and Horras had 11 points each and Evan Wilkinson scored two points. Tillman led the Tigers with 14 points, while Kloster added 12 points and Marchetto contributed nine points.

The Kahoks go to 21-11 and face the host Blue Devils, a 71-40 winner over Alton in the first game, in the final Friday night, a rematch of last year's sectional semifinal won by Quincy on a lay-in at the buzzer 34-32, in a 7 p.m. tip-off. The Tigers end their season 20-11 in what turned out to be a very good season for Edwardsville.

"We won 20 games," Battas said, "and finished third in a great conference. So our guys have a lot to be proud of."