

Edwardsville tops Civic Memorial in baseball contest

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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BETHALTO – Edwardsville, as has been the case for the past several years, is expected to be one of the top teams in the area this year.

Civic Memorial probably doesn't need much convincing on that part as the Tigers scored in every inning following the first, putting up eight in the seventh, in a 16-1 non-conference win at the Bethalto Sports Complex Saturday afternoon.

The win was the Tigers' season opener; the Eagles had played the evening before, giving up a 6-4 lead in the late going and falling to Mount Vernon 7-6.

The Eagles committed seven errors in the loss to the Rams, and committed five more against the Tigers. It didn't sit well with Eagles coach Gary Breuning.

"We had something like 17 guys who we gave a base to in our first two games," Breuning said, "and I don't care who you're playing, whether it's Mount Vernon or Edwardsville, you can't give bases and runs away like that. We've got a lot of stuff to clean up, no doubt."

The Eagles lost 13 seniors from last year's team and are coming into this season with some young players. "We'll get better as the year goes on," Breuning said, "and we knew it was going to be tough going in. But we've got to be making plays behind our pitchers and we can't give up runs like we have."

"We played well," said Tiger coach Tim Funkhouser. "Our command was sharp and our plate appearances got better as the game went on. We had guys who have a bit of pop in the bat and run the bases well.

"We're progressing well so far; we just don't have a set lineup as of yet. We have some guys who play pretty well and we may be doing some mix-and-match for a bit in the lineup."

One good thing Funkhouser saw was his right fielder Matt Zelonko, who led off the fifth with an opposite-field home run over the boards in left. It was the day's only home run. "He's got some power," Funkhouser said, "Once he gets a better feeling about how things go, it should go well."

The Tigers got on the board in the second when Fahd Shaquille and Zelonko scored on a grounder and error to EHS ahead 2-0, then a third-inning double by Shaquille brought home Aaron Jackson to put the Tigers up 3-0.

Edwardsville scored three more times in the fourth on a series of walks and a hit batsman and got another run on Zelonko's homer in the fifth. A sixth-inning double by Trey Riley brought home Jackson for the second time and Edwardsville sealed the deal with eight runs in the seventh, highlighted by a two-run triple by Jackson and a two-run double by Zelonko.

CM's only run came in the fourth, when Devin Daniels and Lucas Jones singled and Tyler Andres brought home Daniels on a fielder's choice.

Zelonko was 2-for-4 on the day with the homer and a double and three RBIs, while Jackson was 1-for-3 with two walks, two RBIs and three runs scored. The Eagles were led by Caleb Buhs with a 1-for-3 day with a triple and Daniels with a 1-for-3 day with a single and run scored.



