



# **Edwardsville Senior Striker Olivia Baca Off To Hot Start For Tigers, Is An iCAN Clinic Female Athlete Of Month**

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EDWARDSVILLE - Olivia Baca, a senior striker for the Edwardsville High School girls' soccer team who scored 25 goals in 2022, is off to a blazing start in 2023, scoring a hat trick in the Tigers' 6-0 season-opening win over Rochester in the Metro Cup showcase event on a chilly and windy Mar. 13 evening at Tiger Stadium.



Baca scored her first two goals within the first five minutes of the match, then climaxed her hat trick with a 52nd-minute golazo, hitting a spectacular, curling shot from distance that found the upper right corner of the net that gave Edwardsville a 5-0 lead at the time.

In her postgame interview, Baca felt very happy for her team and for the prospects ahead for the Tigers.

"I'm feeling really excited for the season," Baca said, "and I feel like we're really playing together as a team and it's really going to be exciting this year."

The preseason practices went well for the Tigers and it helped the optimism that surrounds the team as the regular season starts.

"They were really good," Baca said. "We were trying a new formation and, I mean, it was tough at first and we all had to adjust to something new. But I think we started playing together and it's starting to work out really well."

Baca also gave credit to her teammate on the golazo that gave her her hat trick.

"I got a great ball from Kylie Peel," Baca said, "and I was able to take my defender on and just tap it to the side and finish it, bending."

Although the weather wasn't very cooperative for the match, Baca knows that it'll be how the Tigers play together as a team that will help tell the story of the new season.

"Yeah, I know, it's freezing," Baca said with a smile, "but as long as we stick together and teamwork, of course, teamwork. And just remember to trust the process and trust the formation, trust each other and we'll be fine."

Baca also has goals for the new season, both teamwise and for herself.

"As a team, I think we just want to bond as much as possible," Baca said, "be together and obviously, make it as far as possible. And I think that's really possible," she said with a laugh.

Individually, Baca will try for a 30-goal season, which would be a new school record. And she also feels it's a possibility.

"Yes, I do," Baca said. "I'm gonna try."

Baca also knows what it will take to reach her goal of scoring 30 times this season.

"Oh, my teammates, one hundred percent," Baca said. "They got me the ball today and it was great. Our teamwork was great."

She also knew it was a great way to get a very ambitious season started, both for her and her team.

"Yeah, really exciting start," Baca said with a big smile.

