

# **Tigers Capitalize On Alton's Injuries – See Five Different Goal Scorers In Lopsided Conference Win**

by Bradley Piros, Reporter  
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ALTON – Besides Alton's cross-town rivalry with Marquette Catholic, the Edwardsville Tigers are a close second. The meetings are always circled on the calendar and the games usually deliver.

Last season's games were both one-goal wins by Edwardsville, but Thursday night at Public School Stadium was a rare lopsided contest between the two.

Alton, dealing with some key injuries, knew they weren't going to be able to hang with the Tigers, as Edwardsville ran away with a 6-1 win in a Southwestern Conference matchup.

"There were moments here and there that looked good for us, but overall no," Alton head coach Gwen Sabo said.

"I knew we weren't going to be able to keep up with them for 80 minutes. We just don't have the numbers."

The Redbirds were playing without two key midfielders, senior captain Katie Stark, and junior Jada Bruce.

Stark left last Friday's game against Marquette and was ruled out for the next couple of games with a concussion. Bruce also took a bad bump in that game and hasn't been 100 percent since.

"Injuries just keep coming," Sabo said.

"I'm really not trying to make excuses, but our core group, half of them are unavailable and it makes a huge difference."



The Alton coach, never one to talk negatively or make excuses, knows that things will be different when her team's healthier.

"At this point, it really doesn't matter, we're fighting with Edwardsville for second place. The seedings are out, O'Fallon's locked up the conference title, so really, this doesn't matter. We just want to try to get as healthy as we can for the next two weeks and playoffs."

In a sense, Thursday night's game did not matter. The Panthers have all but clinched a conference title and earned the No. 1 seed in their respected sub-sectional. Edwardsville is No. 2 and Alton is No. 4.



The Tigers and Redbirds are fighting for second place in the conference. They'll meet again this regular season in Edwardsville on May 9, and maybe once more in the postseason, brackets haven't been released just yet.

The game Tuesday night went scoreless for the opening half hour.

The Tigers were knocking on the door early, but Alton's senior goalkeeper Peyton Baker was home to make two or three challenging saves early on.

She could only do so much though.

After one of her goal kicks, her midfield struggled to get control of the ball. The Tigers won the 50-50 challenge and got possession, quickly moved forward again, and this time sophomore midfielder Mea Hook was able to find the back of the net to make it 1-0 in the 30<sup>th</sup> minute.



It was as if the floodgates had opened because the Tigers found two more goals within the next five minutes.

Hook made a couple of nifty moves along the touchline before delivering a perfect pass into the six-yard box. It came straight to senior forward Jordan Nothstine who probably hasn't scored many easier goals.

Hook had her third goal contribution when she put one home in the bottom left corner to make it 3-0 in the 34<sup>th</sup> minute.

Alton gained a little hope in the 52<sup>nd</sup> minute when senior forward Emily Baker scored on a breakaway, but her goal only ended up being a consolation.

The Tigers still had three more in them.

In the 55<sup>th</sup> minute junior forward Brynna Archer scored from a short freekick delivered by senior forward Olivia Baca. Freshman Thea Dimitroff scored a header in the 70<sup>th</sup> minute and Baca scored one herself moments later to get to the eventual scoreline of 6-1.

Edwardsville's six goals came from five different players.

"We have a lot of talent that can score," Edwardsville head coach Abby Federmann said.

"It's nice to see the girls playing so well together and utilizing those opportunities. . . There's other people stepping up which is a great thing."

This season, the Tigers have had 10 different goal scorers; Baca leads the team with 17 goals, and after tonight, Hook has six. It was also the 17th goal of the season for Alton's Baker.



With the result, the Tigers improved to 11-3 on the season and 5-2 in the conference. Alton goes to 8-6-1 on the year and 4-3 in the SWC. It was Alton's fourth straight loss this season, its longest losing streak in three seasons.

"Some of them take it harder," Sabo said.

"But overall I think the girls know we're trying, we're just not 100 percent healthy. We're doing the best we can with what we've got."

It was nothing but respect from Federmann postgame about the struggling Redbirds.

"Alton's always a great team," she said.

"You never come into this game thinking that it's going to be easy. They always give it to us, and Gwen always has an outstanding team. We'll see them again."