



Tigers Battle To End Against Tough Fort Zumwalt West

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - Edwardsville's baseball team fought back from a big 10-0 deficit after an eight-run explosion by Fort Zumwalt West and made it a game, but fell 12-8 in a Friday matchup at Tom Pile Field.

The Jaguars, from O'Fallon, Mo., in St. Charles County, used strong pitching by starter Jeter Rupp and also took advantage of a pair of Tiger errors to score their eight runs in the top of the third inning. Edwardsville kept fighting back, scoring eight times in the final four innings but fell short as West won their 21st game of the season.

"Well, we ended up not getting the task done that we wanted today," said Tigers head coach Tim Funkhouser. "We knew we were going to be in for a tough fight with Fort Zumwalt West and they've put up some big wins this year, their pitching's been outstanding, and their defense too. Today, their bats came alive and we didn't kind of match them early on. and put ourselves in a big hole.

"To our guys' credit, they continued to fight and battle and we put ourselves in a situation where we ended up having the tying run on deck. I was proud of our guys to keep competing that way and hopefully, we learned some lessons about patience, and about making a play or whatever it is. But that's why you go out and compete. Credit Zumwalt West, because they did a lot of good things at the plate and kind of used their momentum to their advantage of making big hits when they needed to."



Rupp had a very good game against Edwardsville, holding the Tigers to four runs on only two hits while walking five and striking out six.

"Yeah, their lefty, he's pretty tough," Funkhouser said. "He's got a really good change-up, he's got a good breaking pitch and his fastball, he moves it in and out. So you've got two of those things going, you're going to have a lot of success. But the way he pitched is going to shut a lot of teams down and we were fortunate to get him out when we did, but ideally, we could have done that maybe even an inning or so earlier to give ourselves a chance to stack more runs."

Although Edwardsville trailed 10-0 after three-and-a-half innings, the Tigers fought back to cut the lead to 10-4 after five and eventually to 12-8 before falling short.

"Yeah, you just want to keep playing each pitch," Funkhouser said, "and this is one of those games where, you know, if you just keep playing each pitch, you never know what can happen. If we do a few things differently or get a big hit in a certain situation, maybe it turns out differently. But that's why you play the game and we didn't come out on top. We give them credit."

Zumwalt West jumped on top in the first when Carter Robertson drew a walk, was sacrificed to second and scored on a misplayed fly to left by Nolan Sissom, with Sissom reaching second to put the Jaguars up 1-0. In the third, West sent 12 men to the plate and scored their eight runs to go ahead 9-0, all with two out. Kenton Deverman drew a bases-loaded walk to force home the first run, then a two-run single by Cody Gough and an error on the play brought home three more runs. Another run scored on a Jack Hartnagle RBI single and the final three runs came home on a two-RBI single by Roberson, with another error allowing the third run to score, making it 9-0 for West.

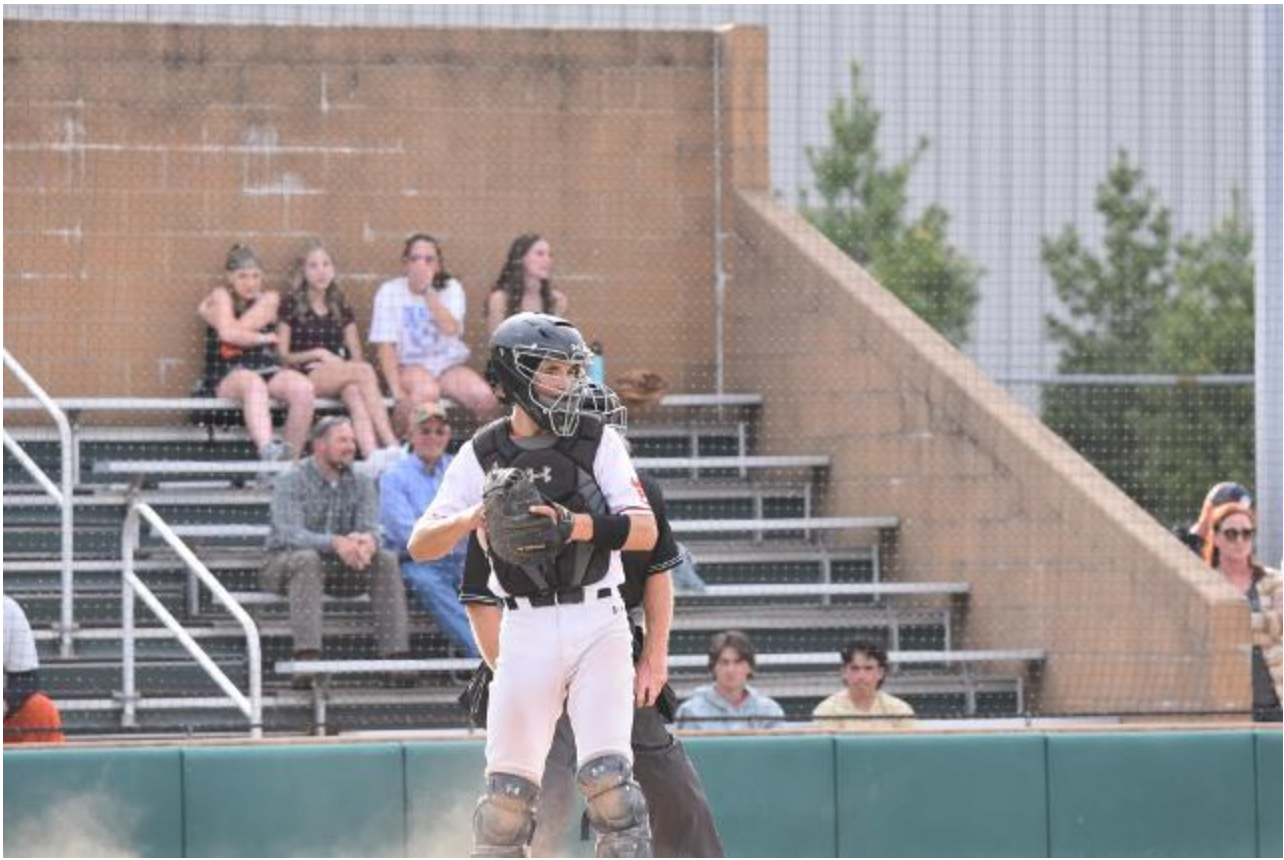
Rupp kept the Tigers at bay in the first three innings, giving up a walk to Lucas Huebner and a single to Cole Funkhouser, and added another run in the top of the fourth on an RBI single by Deverman, scoring Sissom to make it 10-0 for West. The Tigers broke through in the home half on a single by Riley Iffrig and a walk to Caeleb Copeland, with both moving up on a ground out to first. Iffrig scored on a wild pitch and when the catcher threw the ball away trying to get Iffrig at the plate, Copeland scored on the error to cut the lead to 10-2.

In the bottom of the fifth, three straight walks to Funkhouser, Kayden Jennings and Iffrig loaded the bases with two out, with Copeland singling home two runs to make it 10-4, but in the top of the sixth, the Jaguars got the runs back when Landon Young reached on an error by the third baseman to lead off the inning and two outs later, pinch hitter Peyton Kraus walked and Logan Cowick singled home the two runs to make it 12-4.

In the bottom of the seventh, a walk to Iffrig and a Copeland single started the Tigers off, with both moving up on a wild pitch. Huebner singled home both runners to make it 12-6 and a Bryce Beyers single and error brought in two more runs to make it 12-8, but from there, the Jaguars shut the door, with Jennings striking out to end the game.

Zumwalt West is now 22-6, while the Tigers drop to 17-7 and have a busy week ahead, with five games, starting with a home-and-home Southwestern Conference series against Belleville West, the first game at home on Tuesday and the return game Thursday at West, then play the next three games at home, hosting Chatham Glenwood next Friday, with all three games starting at 4:30 p.m., and then host a cluster on Saturday, playing Highland at 10 a.m. and Teutopolis at 1 p.m.





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