

# Columbia Wins Battle Of Regional Baseball Powers - Beats Edwardsville 8-5

by Nathan Tucker  
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EDWARDSVILLE - Edwardsville hosted the Eagles from Columbia on Wednesday afternoon at Tom Pile Field, in a battle of two of the best baseball teams in the Metro area. The Tigers came into Wednesday with a 23-7 record, Columbia at 25-3, both at the top of their respective conferences.

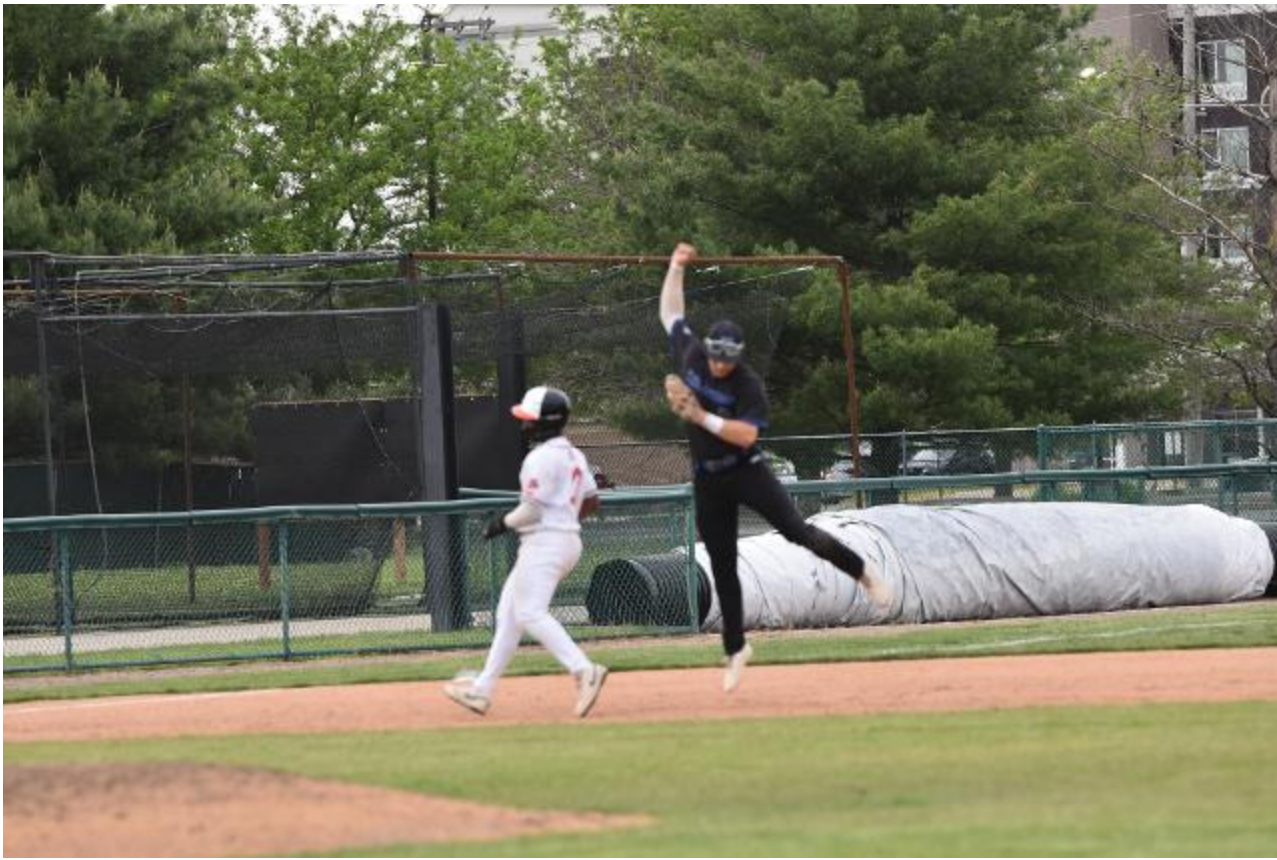
It was also a face-off between two pitchers with Big 12 baseball in their futures. Freshman Tony Eberlin, a TCU commit, started on the mound for Tim Funkhouser's Tigers. Senior star and Kansas signee Dominic Voegele manned the bump for the visiting Eagles.

On the day, it was Voegele taking the win for his team, as Columbia won at Tom Pile Field by an 8-5 score. It was a fairly quiet affair until the Eagles, led by none other than Dominic Voegele, exploded in the third inning.



“Columbia’s got an outstanding team, that was always going to be a heck of a challenge for us today.” said Edwardsville head coach Tim Funkhouser. “Dominic Voegele is obviously one of the best pitchers in the Midwest, and one of the best competitors we’ve faced in a long while too.”





Edwardsville starter Tony Eberlin walked the leadoff man Jack Steckler and Voegele made him pay in the next at bat, sending a shot well over the left field fence parallel to Center Grove Road.

A slew of singles from the Eagles followed, and Tony Eberlin's day was cut short in the third. Eberlin's line on the day was 2 1/3 innings, allowing five hits and five earned runs.

"I thought (Eberlin) was good through the first couple of innings," Funkhouser said of his starter. "And then he walks the lead-off batter and Voegele puts a swing on a ball and plates two. But I thought he competed really well for where he is. I thought he was really in a rhythm early on and making great pitches, then just got out of that rhythm and left some over the plate."

Two 1-2-3 innings for Dominic Voegele on the mound followed, stifling a potential early comeback for Edwardsville. Voegele was incredibly sharp in the first five innings, mixing four pitches, with his fastball averaging well over 90 mph.

"He just has a great feel for the game, dominant stuff," said Funkhouser of the opposing starter today. "He kind of ate up our guys a little bit early on, but later in the game we started to see the ball better."

Columbia added two more on a Brody Landgraf two-run homer in the fifth inning, stretching their lead to 7-0 at the time. Landgraf connected with a breaking ball and sent a laser over the right field wall.

For added insurance, the Eagles pushed across an eighth run in the sixth, as walks and a throwing error came back to bite Edwardsville reliever Tyler Powell. Naturally, it was Dominic Voegele who came across for the eighth run.

Edwardsville showed a lot of fight in the sixth, batting around in the inning, putting up five runs on Voegele, dampening the Kansas signee's afternoon. The five-run inning was highlighted by a fielding error that put the Tigers on the board, and a two-RBI double from senior infielder Kayden Jennings pushed across the fourth and fifth runs for the hosts.

"Credit to our guys to keep battling," said Tim Funkhouser after the game. "It's not too easy to go up against a guy who's got that type of stuff, command, and composure."

The Eagles were held in the top of the seventh by freshman Tiger reliever Chase Milburn. Unfortunately for the home crowd at Tom Pile Field, Columbia reliever Logan Sabo shut down a potential comeback with a 1-2-3 seventh inning to put the seal on the win.

With the victory, it's another notch in Dominic Voegele's belt as he continues to lead this Columbia Eagles team. An Eagles team that now sits at 26-3, well atop their conference and ranked #4 of all 2A programs in Illinois on MaxPreps.

The Tigers and Tim Funkhouser will use Wednesday as a learning experience at this time of the season. The Tigers are now 23-8 with the loss, but are ranked third of all Illinois 4A baseball teams. They're scheduled to face Belleville East on Thursday and have a trip to Jersey planned for Friday, weather permitting.

"Our guys do a great job of turning the page," Tim Funkhouser noted following the loss. "They love the game, they love each other, and it's fun coming to work with them each day, and seeing them develop. We're scheduled for Belleville East tomorrow, but if the weather gets us we'll have a good practice and preparation anyway. We look forward to each day."