



# Hamilton Has Another Big Game In Circle, Strikes Out Four, Fox Drives In Two As Edwardsville Wins Over Southwestern 5-0

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer  
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EDWARDSVILLE - Senior pitcher Avery Hamilton had another big game inside the circle, striking out four batters in six innings of work, while Marley Fox delivered a pair of RBI hits and Jillian Hawkes also had a key RBI as Edwardsville won over Piasa Southwestern 5-0 in a softball game played Wednesday at the Edwardsville Sports Complex.

The Tigers played their Senior Day game, with both seniors - Zoie Boyd and Hamilton -- and their families honored and saluted for their contributions to the Tigers' softball program. Afterward, Hamilton pitched well, holding the Piasa Birds at bay, also getting some good defensive play and timely hitting when needed.

"I thought Avery did a good job of mixing up her spots there," said Edwardsville head coach Caty Happe, "and the defense was great behind her. Made a lot of good plays, which was good to see, and hits that came at timely times that got us some runs."

The RBI hits in both the fourth and fifth innings, which allowed the Tigers to extend their lead, couldn't have come at a better time.

Southwestern is a small school softball power in the Metro-East area and both played and competed hard throughout the seven innings.

"Absolutely," Happe said. "They're free swingers and every kid in that lineup can do some damage. So great that we kept them a little bit off-balance and, like I said, able to score runs."

The entire Tiger lineup had big plays up and down, which is a very good sign indeed for the team as the postseason inches closer.

"It is," Happe said. "It's good to see."





Southwestern kept battling throughout the game and never gave in and the Birds competed well throughout the game.

"I'm feeling pretty good," said Southwestern head coach Amanda Edwards. "We knew we were going come in here and face good competition as always. And I just told my girls before the game I just wanted to compete and I feel like we did that. We competed, we put the ball in play and their defense worked hard and so did ours."

The Birds have had a good season thus far and also had a big win over Carrollton, which has given the team a boost of confidence going into the upcoming IHSA Class 2A playoffs.

"I'm very proud of every single one of them," Edwards said. "We're a very young team, we don't have a single senior, I have three juniors who have stepped up and kind of taken on that leadership role and they're doing a phenomenal job of leading our sophomores and freshmen to kind of mold the program that we want to run. I couldn't be more prouder of this group this year and I know it's going to continue to get better and better from here on out."

It's a situation that would make former Southwestern coach Peg Mitchell very proud and she's still someone Edwards relies on for advice.



"She (Mitchell) had a lot to do with shaping me as a coach, that's for sure," Edwards said. "I got the pleasure to coach with her for six phenomenal years and she is a phenomenal role model. I talk to her daily, still. So I'm very thankful for the legacy she's left here."

After retiring the Birds in the opening inning, the Tigers put together a pair of hits to bring in the first run of the game to make the score 1-0, and it stayed that way through the early innings, with Hamilton getting out of a first-and-second jam with two outs in the fourth, after both Josie Hagen and Maddie Fenstermaker singled, when a ball hit to the right fielder turned into a ground out on a close play. Edwardsville started off the home half with singles by Jillian Lane and Hawkes, both advancing when a throw to third by the shortstop got away for an error, both runners advancing. Fox singled home Lane, moving Hawkes to third and Riley Nelson's sacrifice fly to left scored Hawkes to make it 3-0.

Boyd and Grace Oertle both singled with one out to start the fifth, with both going to second and third when the shortstop caught a liner off the bat of Lane, held on to it long enough to record the out, but lost the ball when her glove hit the ground, allowing the runners to move up. RBI singles by Hawkes and Fox scored both Boyd and Oertle to make it 5-0.

From there, Hamilton and Fox retired 10 of the last 11 batters for the Birds, allowing only a single by Ella Kallal in the sixth to claim the 5-0 win.

The Piasa Birds end their regular season at 17-12 and next play in the Class 2A regional at Roxana City Park against Columbia next Wednesday, May 17, in a 5:30 p.m. game with the winner going to the final on May 20 in an 11 a.m. start.

The Tigers are now 25-4 and play at Belleville East on Thursday, then concludes its regular season next week, with a home game against O'Fallon next Tuesday, then play on the road May 18 at Jersey and May 19 at Waterloo, with all games starting at 4:30 p.m. Edwardsville opens its Class 4A playoffs at the Belleville West Regional May 23 against Granite City in a 4:30 p.m. start.



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