

Tigers Gain Much Confidence In Match As Lancers Hold Off Edwardsville In Boys Volleyball Regional Semifinal 25- 17, 24-26. 25-19

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - Edwardsville's boys' volleyball season came to an end on Tuesday, but the Tigers gave Belleville East everything they could handle before losing a close three-set match 25-17, 24-26, 25-19 to the Lancers in the semifinals of the IHSA boys volleyball regional Tuesday evening at Lucco-Jackson Gym.

The win puts East into Thursday evening's final against local rival Belleville Althoff Catholic, who defeated Alton in the second semifinal 25-17, 25-20. It ends the Tigers' season at 14-17, but gave a glimpse into the future of the Edwardsville program.

"We played well," said Tigers' first-year coach Doug Allen. "I was proud of the way we played. We got to show what we were made of, we played straight up with a top team and East is a top team."



It was the fourth time the Lancers had prevailed over Edwardsville this season, but in all four matches, the Tigers closed the gap between them and East each time, with both teams going toe-to-toe with each other throughout the contest.

"I think the boys now know they can play with this caliber of top teams," Allen said, also giving praise to two of his top players on the night, Joe Liston and Lucas Gebhardt.

"I would say Joe and Lucas stood out very well," Allen said. "Lucas was all over the place and he kept us alive. They played hard and we didn't come out on top, but it was a fun match to watch."

The Tigers lose only four seniors to graduation - four-year setter Wyatt Blunt, three-year player Blake Hauschild and first-year players De'Shawn Larson and Dominik Kerpan - and return a plethora of sophomores and juniors for 2024. along with some promising freshmen. This season was about what Allen expected but was also pleasantly surprised with one item.

"It was about what I expected at the end," Allen said. "We lost some matches I thought we should have won, but in the end, the quality of our effort was about what I hoped for and expected. In fact, I thought we played a little bit better than I thought we could."

The Tigers end their season on a positive note with their 14-17 mark, while the Lancers go to 30-3-2 going into Thursday's final against the Crusaders. That match starts at 6 p. m., with the winner advancing to the New Lenox Lincoln-Way West sectional, going up against the O'Fallon regional winner, either the host Panthers or Belleville West, Saturday afternoon at a site to be determined in the Metro-East area.

The sectional final is set for May 30 at 6 p.m. The state finals will be played June 2-3 at Hoffman Estates High School in northwest suburban Chicago.





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