



Rathgeb Draws Bases-Loaded, Two-Out Walk In Bottom Of Seventh To Give Tigers Dramatic 5-4 4A Regional Final Win Over Kahoks

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - Greyson Rathgeb drew a two out, bases loaded walk to force home the winning run in the bottom of the seventh as Edwardsville pulled out a dramatic, come-from-behind 5-4 win over Collinsville in the IHSA Class 4A regional final Saturday morning at Tom Pile Field.

The Tigers and Kahoks were tied 3-3 going into the seventh inning, when Collinsville scored to take a 4-3 lead, but Edwardsville rallied with two runs in the home half, tying the game when Kayden Jennings was hit by a pitch with the bases loaded and ending on Rathgeb's walk.

"Well, I'm just really proud of our guys for continuing to compete throughout the game," said Edwardsville head coach Tim Funkhouser. "That game had a lot of twists and turns and our guys continued to show great fortitude throughout and Collinsville did the same. You've got to give them a ton of credit the way they competed throughout the game. (Ethan) Bagwell was outstanding for them, made it really tough on our hitters. So for us to scratch out a couple of runs there in the bottom of the seventh was really fun to see."

The Tigers also had to come back when an apparent game-winning homer by Andrew Hendrickson was called foul, sending off a wave of protest from Edwardsville. Hendrickson came right back and stroked a single to load the bases, which helped set up the game-winning situation.

"I think Andrew, he put a great swing on that ball," Funkhouser said, "and that was just a clutch swing and producing there. And unfortunately, they (the umpires) didn't feel the same way I did on the play," he said with a laugh. "But he showed great fortitude. Like, he was a rock and he's been that way for us this year, big time. For him to go back in that box and then, lace a single, I mean, I was so glad, because it was a great reflection. I wish it would have been the walk-off, it would have been a great story, because that was a clutch swing. But the second one was just as clutch and helped him propel us, eventually, to win it on the walk-off there."

Joe Chiarodo started on the mound for Edwardsville and also overcame early adversity to pitch a good game, going six innings and striking out four.

"Joe struggled a little bit and didn't make as many pitches as he wanted early," Funkhouser said. "But he was able to fight through that and battle back and that was huge. Because the first inning was rough for him and then, the second inning, he fought through it and then, after that, I thought he really settled in. We were able to get some length out of him and then, when Andrew Hendrickson came in, he did a great job of keeping the game. He got second and third and nobody out. For him to get out of that with only one run there was huge."



In the bottom of the seventh, Rathgeb drew the game-ending walk, but the top of the lineup help set up the situation as well.

"Well, all our guys, especially the first couple of guys even leading off of taking some pitches," Funkhouser said, "and we didn't give anybody a take sign, even though we were down a run. When it was a 3-0 count, we gave them the take, but other than that, let's put a swing on a ball, even with the wind blowing in. It wasn't like we were trying to go up there and hammer a grand slam home run or anything. But from that standpoint, I think our guys showed some great discipline and Greyson Rathgeb, a sophomore out there that's played, he's probably been out in the field half the time this year for us and he's continued to compete and produce. He gets better in practice each day, so it was fun to see."

The Kahoks took an early 2-0 lead in the opening inning, starting with Carter Harrington singling, going to second on a wild pitch, with Bagwell singling Harrington to third and Adam Bovinett drawing a walk to load the bases. After C.J. Schaaf struck out, Kolby Anderson reached on an error by the pitcher, allowing Harrington and Bagwell to score to give Collinsville the early lead.

Edwardsville came right back to tie the game in the bottom of the first. With the bases loaded and one out, Hendrickson was hit by a pitch to force home Chiarodo and Kayden

Jennings drew a walk one out later to tie the game 2-2. In the third, Hendrickson singled and stole second, went to third on a single by Jennings and came in on a RBI single by Lucas Krebs to give the Tigers a 3-2 lead. After another base hit, Bagwell came in to pitch and was heroic for the Kahoks, going nearly five innings and keeping the Tigers at bay most of the way.

Bagwell set down eight in a row through the sixth to keep the game close and in the top of the sixth, Collinsville tied things up, starting with one out. Anderson was hit by a pitch and went to second on a passed ball, then Alcorn reached on an error to put men on first and second. Luke Weller put down a perfect bunt and was thrown out at first, with Anderson hustling around third and coming in to score on the throw to first to tie the game 3-3.

The Kahoks took the lead in the top of the seventh, when Alec Marchetto came in and walked Bryce Lemp to start the inning. Hendrickson immediately came in and walked Harrington, both advancing on a wild pitch. Lemp scored on a ground out to the shortstop, Lemp going on the throw to first to give Collinsville a 4-3 lead. Bovinett struck out and both Schaaf and Anderson were hit by pitches to load the bases, but Hendrickson struck out Alcorn to end the inning.

Riley Iffrig and Caeleb Copeland drew walks to start off the Tigers' seventh, then Hendrickson sent a pitch over the fence down the right field line to apparently win the game for Edwardsville, but the first base umpire ruled it foul. Hendrickson then came back to single to right to load the bases. Iffrig was forced at the plate on a grounder by Lucas Huebner, but Jennings was hit by a pitch to force in Copeland with the tying run. Krebs struck out, but Rathgeb drew the game winning walk on a full count pitch to give the Tigers the 5-4 win and the regional title.

Collinsville ends its season at 16-15, while the Tigers are now 28-9 and advance to the Illinois Wesleyan University Sectional, where they will play O'Fallon, a 2-1, eight-inning winner over Belleville West to take the Belleville East regional, in the semifinal game Wednesday at Redbirds Field in Alton at 4 p.m.

The Tigers-Panthers winner goes on to the final next Saturday, June 3, in Bloomington at 11 a.m. against the winner of the second semifinal between the winner of the Pekin regional, either Plainfield Central or Normal Community, and Minooka, who won their own regional over Plainfield South 8-6.



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