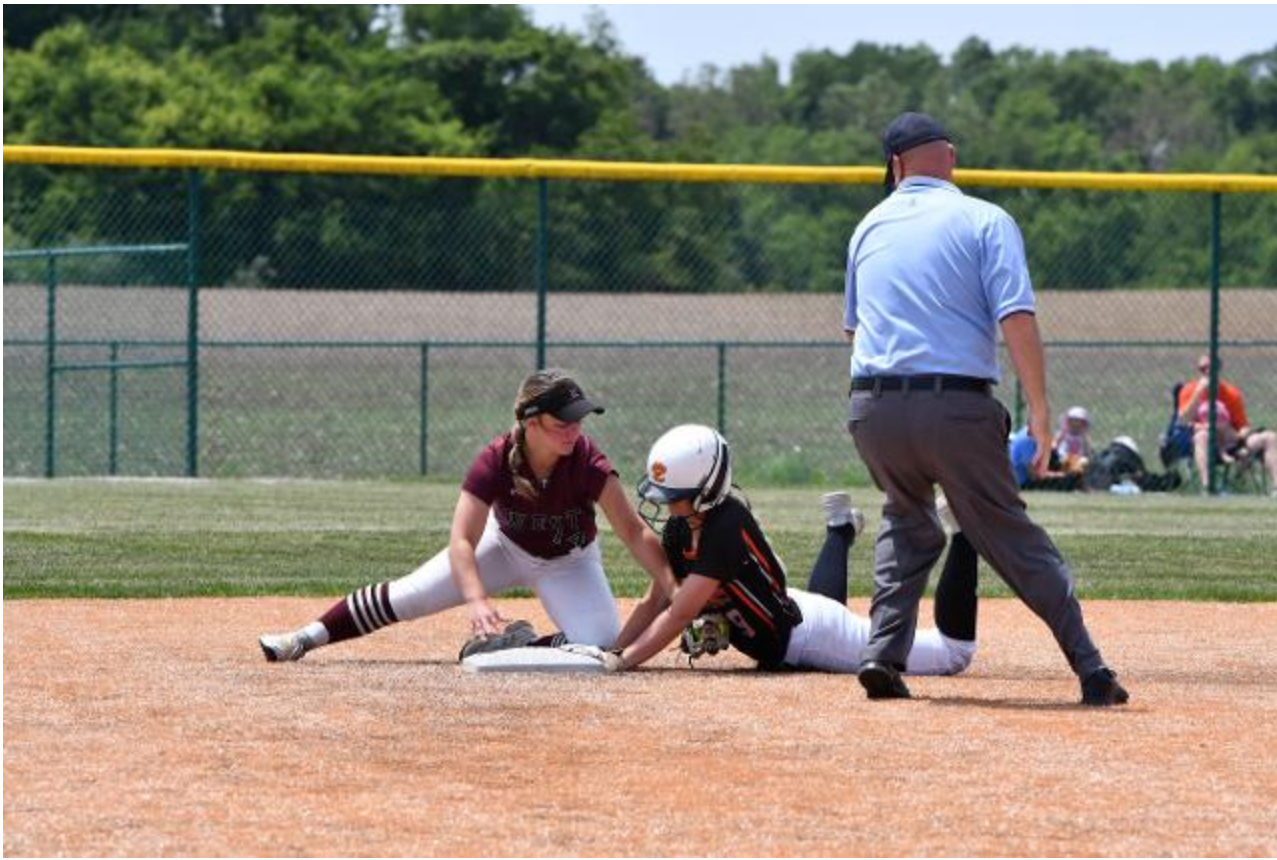




Lane Has Three Hits, RBI, Nelson, Oertle Have Two Hits, Three RBIs each as Edwardsville Win Class 4A Regional Over Maroons 11-5

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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BELLEVILLE - Jillian Lane had three hits and an RBI, both Grace Oertle and Riley Nelson had two hits and three RBIs each, and Avery Hamilton struck out three while in the circle as Edwardsville defeated host Belleville West 11-5 to take the IHSA Class 4A softball regional final Saturday morning at West's park.

The win advances the Tigers to the Normal Community sectional, where they will face Belleville East, who won the O'Fallon regional on Friday over the host Panthers 10-2 on Friday, in the semifinal.

The Tigers got off to a good start and built the lead throughout, playing very well throughout the game.

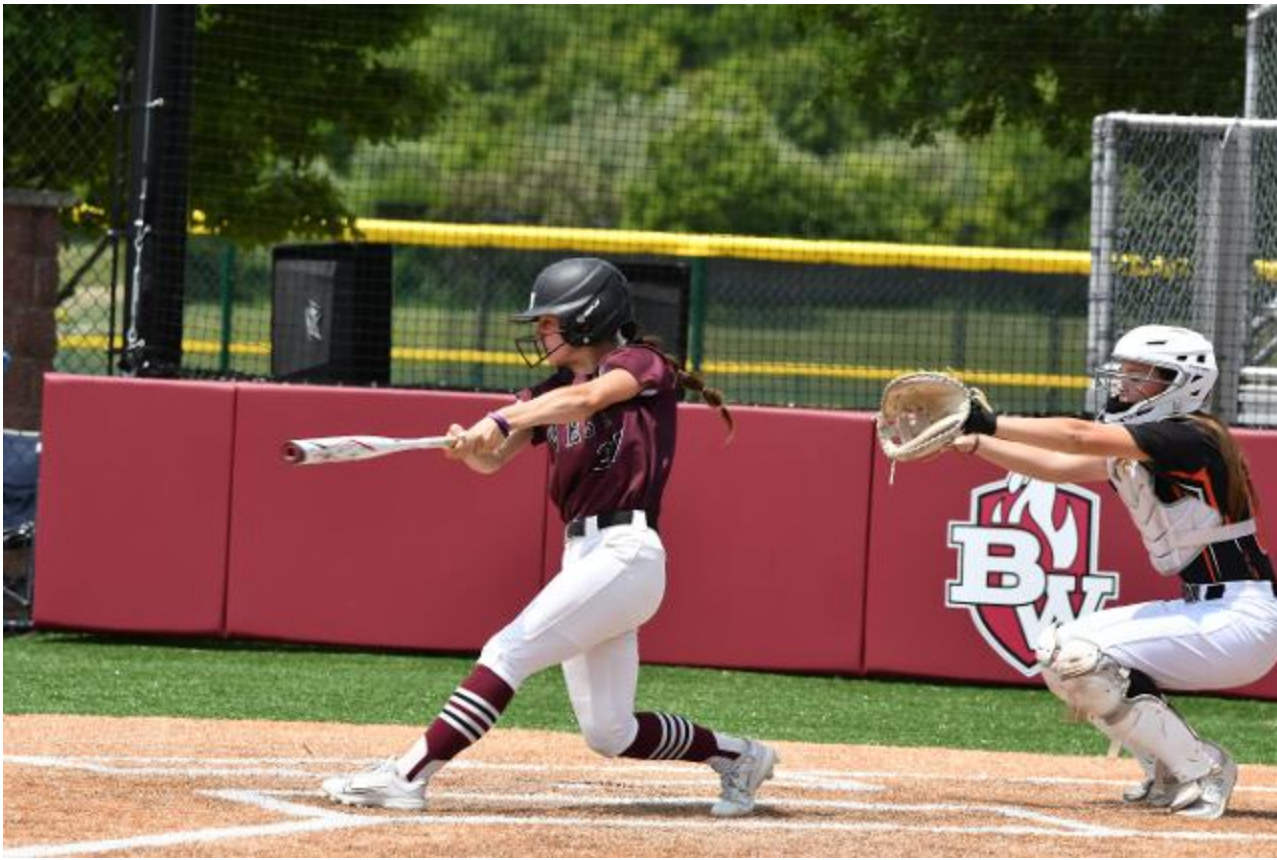
"We started off with two runs in the first and that start got us going," said Edwardsville head coach Caty Happe, "That's a good hitting Belleville West team and when they scored, I thought we did a good job in responding."

The Tiger lineup continues to hit well and consistently and it's been a key to the team's success this season.

"More good hitting up and down the lineup," Happe said, "and we got different things from different kids, which is good."

Hamilton also did her usual yeoman work inside the circle, with Nelson there to back her up when she went in relief.





"Avery did a great job starting us off," Happe said. "and when they started hitting her, Riley did a great job coming in and shutting them down."

And the result was another regional championship, Edwardsville's first under Happe.

"I told the girls that this isn't something that happens every day," Happe said, "and they should be proud of it."

The Tigers took a 2-0 lead in the bottom of the first, then added on three runs in the third to extend the lead to 5-0 before West hit back for three in the top of the fourth to cut the edge to 5-3. The Tigers countered with two runs in the home half of the inning to extend the lead to 7-3, with the Maroons scoring twice more in the top of the fifth to make it 7-5, but Edwardsville scored six runs in the bottom of the sixth to take their 11-5 win and advance.

To go along with the performances of Lane, Oertle and Nelson, Zoie Boyd and Hamilton each had two hits, Marley Fox came up with a hit and RBI, Madi Kolakowski had a hit and Shelby Gorniak also drove in a run. Hamilton went 4.2 innings, allowing five runs on four hits while walking one and fanning three. Nelson had 2.1 shutout innings, walking one and striking out one.

West ends its season at 10-15, while the Tigers go to 29-5 and meet up with the Lancers Tuesday afternoon at 4:30 p.m., with the winner going to the final against either Bradley-Bourbonnais, who won their own regional over Minooka 7-2, or East Moline United, a 16-10 winner over Pekin to take their own regional, in the sectional final/Round of 16 game Friday, June 2, at 4:30 p.m.

"Two good ball clubs are going to battle it out," Happe said. "That's why they play the games and we'll be ready to go."



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