

Strong Pitching By Spaulding, Missed Opportunities End Tigers' Softball Season In 6-3 Loss To Bradley-Bourbonnais In 4A Sectional Final

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NORMAL - Very strong pitching by Bradley-Bourbonnais' Libby Spaulding, along with missed opportunities, helped to end the very successful Edwardsville softball season as the Tigers lost to the Boilermakers 6-3 in the final of the IHSA Class 4A sectional at Normal Community High School in Normal on Friday afternoon.

The Tigers, who finished third a year ago, ended their season at 30-7, the second straight year Edwardsville finished with 30 wins, with the team responding well after BBCHS hit the Tigers with four runs in the top of the first to take an early lead.

"We did a great job," Edwardsville head coach Caty Happe said. "They scored four runs in the first, we responded and got three of them back and other than that, we had runners on in every inning, but we just couldn't score them."

Defensively, the Tigers played well and managed to turn a pair of double plays, and pitcher Avery Hamilton was three-for-three at the plate and was aided by a pair of hits by Marley Fox. But in the end, the missed opportunities and Spaulding's pitching proved to be too much.

"We played against a good pitcher today," Happe said, "and we took too many strikes. We needed to be more aggressive at the plate."

The loss doesn't take away the many accomplishments of the Tigers this season.

"I told the girls that this game doesn't define them," Happe said, "and we really had a great season."

The Boilermakers started off by scoring four in the first, with the Tigers countering with three runs of their own in the home half, making the score 4-3. But BBCHS scored single runs in the third and sixth while keeping Edwardsville off the scoreboard for the remainder of the game to take the win and advance to the super-sectional and state quarterfinals.



Hamilton's three hits led the way, with Fox right behind with her two hits, while Riley Nelson and Grace Blakemore each had a hit and RBI and both Zoie Boyd and Jillian Lane each had a hit. Hamilton went all the way inside the circle, allowing six runs on 10 hits, walking one and striking out three.

Suttyn Hop led the Boilermakers with three hits, while Natalie Johnson had two hits, including a home run, and two RBIs, Spaulding helped herself with a hit and two RBIs, Liberty Rivard had a hit and RBI, Bella Pusateri, Kiersten Martin and Ellie Haggard all had hits and Ella Perkins also drove in a run. Spaulding also threw a complete game inside the circle, giving up three runs on nine hits, walking five and fanning six.

The Tigers season ends at 30-7, while BBCHS is now 24-5 and advances to the Illinois Wesleyan super-sectional Monday afternoon at 4:30 against Yorkville, a 10-0 winner over Wheaton-Warrenville South in the final of the Oswego sectional. The Tigers lose both Hamilton and Boyd to graduation and will be greatly missed.

"They're two great kids and awesome softball players," Happe said.

The future of the Tigers is very good indeed, with many of the younger players picking up valuable experience at the varsity level and Happe was very pleased with how her first year as head coach went.

"It was a pleasure to be able to coach this group," Happe said.