

Funkhouser's Family Success Story At Edwardsville "More Than Baseball"

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
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EDWARDSVILLE - It's impossible to think about Tigers baseball without thinking about the Funkhouser family.

Through three generations, the family has countless stories, more specifically, a lot of stories from the state tournament.

Bill Funkhouser coached the Tigers from 1973-1980 and took the team to its fourth-ever state appearance in his final season.

Tom Pile took over the program for the next 18 years and retired after the 1998 season, one that saw the Tigers finish a 40-0 season with their second state title.

Some time went on before the Funkhouser name returned to the program when Tim, Bill's son began playing under Pile.

Tim was a key part of the team that lifted the program's first state championship in 1990.

When Pile retired in 1998, Tim continued his coaching career for the Tigers, after starting out at Triad.

Tim had the privilege to coach his two boys, Evan (2021 grad) and Cole (2023 grad), the Funkhouser's third generation for the program.

Evan helped win the program's third state title in 2019 while Cole went back-to-back in 2022 and 2023 to make it five state titles for Edwardsville, four total for Tim, three as a coach and one as a player.

This year was Edwardsville's 18th state appearance. Tim was there for 11 of them, two as a player and nine as a coach.

Tim's 24th season saw him reach a rare milestone, his [800th coaching career win](#). It came after a 3-2 win over Minooka as the Tigers lifted a sectional plaque at Illinois Wesleyan University.

Over the weekend, Edwardsville returned to Duly Health & Care Field in Joliet with hopes to defend its state title, and that's exactly what happened.

After a 7-3 win over Elmhurst York in the semifinal, the Tigers beat Brother Rice 6-4 in the championship game to win [back-to-back titles](#).

It was Cole's fourth time being there, twice as a spectator in 2017 when the Tigers finished runner-up and again in 2019 to watch his older brother win a title. He made the third and fourth trips count.

After swinging on the first pitch of the title game against Brother Rice, Cole had himself a day. With the game tied at 4-4, he hit an RBI-single to regain the lead and fend off the Crusaders.

"Right when I was rounding first base I saw my dad smiling and it kind of made it more than baseball at that point," Cole said. "It was really special."

"I had a dad moment, truthfully. I've almost been numb at times," Tim said.

"Evan, my oldest son, hit a home-run in the postseason and that was the first time I really felt that even though he had a really successful season and then Cole's had a great season this year and for him to leadoff the game and get stuff started, and to get that big hit, it really hit me as a dad moment."

The night ended with Tim being able to put a second state medal around Cole's neck after handing one out to Evan in 2019.

"I'm so blessed," Tim said about being able to coach his boys.

