

Tigers Football Team Prepares For New Season Under First-Year Coach Kelsey Pickering

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - The Edwardsville High School football team has had a very successful off-season and has gotten off to a great start in preseason practice as the Tigers get ready for the 2023 season with a game against Jackson, Mo. at 7 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 25, at Tiger Stadium.

Edwardsville will be playing under a new coach, longtime defensive coordinator Kelsey Pickering, who was promoted to head coach after former coach Matt Martin stepped down after 13 successful seasons at the helm of the Tigers.



"Well, I think it's great," Pickering said about how the first week of preseason workouts has gone. "We've been blessed with the weather, we have a great team, we've got really, really good senior leadership. That's all, those are the positives. I think we can still get better in our leadership, but we're doing good. And it's nice to see us being a team."

Many of the Tiger players have stood out in the early days of practice and Pickering was reluctant to single out one player over another.

"You know what? That list is too long to point at one person," Pickering said. "I think that's one of the beauties of our team this year, is that I think we're really deep at a lot of positions. So I don't know. I know we have guys that are getting national recognition, we've got guys who are getting regional recognition, we've got guys who are getting offers. And those are all great things. But we're a team and to point one or two guys out, I think would be a disservice to the rest of our guys."



Pickering, of course, is looking forward to the team having a really big season and also is looking forward to the opening fixture against the Indians, a traditional power in southeast Missouri. Edwardsville pulled off a big win at Jackson in last year's season opener, a 41-34 double overtime win that snapped a long-standing home winning streak for the Indians.

"Oh, yeah," Pickering said. "It's going to be an exciting night and we're really looking forward to it. The atmosphere down there was amazing last year and I know we can match it up here. And it's just going to be fun."

Pickering has big expectations as he takes over the Tigers' program and those expectations don't change from year to year.

"What's really nice is I don't think the expectations of Tiger football change," Pickering said. "I think there's always that goal that had been set long before we even got here. And I think it's about carrying those traditions and doing the right things about how it's supposed to be done. And so for me, it's just trying to continue the success. Edwardsville is a successful place and now, we have to figure out how to try to go even further than we've ever been before."

Pickering is looking forward to getting started on the team's 2023 journey to a very highly successful season and the opening game.

"Oh, yeah," a very enthusiastic Pickering said. "I know our guys are ready to get to week one. I know as coaches, we cherish every practice. So we'll take as many practices as we can get before that first game," he said with a laugh. "But I know the guys are ready and I know in the next week or two, they're going to be ready to see somebody else."

The excitement level in camp is very high and Pickering, his coaching staff and players are all set to get the new season started.

"We're excited," Pickering said. "We've got a great coaching staff, we've got great players. It's just everybody involved right now. It's exciting."



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