

Edwardsville captures first of its meetings with Alton 6-1

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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The high school baseball season may only be a couple of weeks old, but two of the top teams in the area took the field in Alton Thursday afternoon.

Southwestern Conference rivals Edwardsville and Alton clashed at Lloyd Hopkins Field at Gordon Moore Park in what could be the first of three meetings between the teams this year. The Tigers were the first team to get to Alton pitcher Bryan Hudson this season.

Jordan Hovey sparked Edwardsville with a 2-for-4 day, including a leadoff triple in the third inning that sparked a four-run rally and led to a 6-1 Tiger win.



“It was good, knowing what to expect,” said EHS coach Tim Funkhouser. “Our guys really competed today; you don't get to see a guy who can throw in the low 90s every day.”

The Tigers had an ace of their own in the hole, though – Daniel Lloyd, who pitched pretty well himself; in four innings of work, Lloyd gave up three hits, didn't allow a run and had eight strikeouts, including a run of four in a row at one point.

“Give a lot of credit to Daniel, he came up with some big pitches when he needed them,” Funkhouser said. “Once he settled in, his touch was good.”

That two good teams collided and one came away winners didn't surprise Redbird coach Todd Haug.” Two good teams played each other, and it is what it is,” Haug said. “They made a couple of more plays than we did today, but I'd rather have what happened today happen now instead of in May.”

“Lloyd's a good pitcher, and with a good change-up, it made his fastball better.”

Knowing he has a good team led by the St. Louis area's best pitcher, Haug realizes teams will be giving their best shot against the Redbirds. "We're in a position right now where no one's going to feel sorry for us," Haug said. "We'll just go back to the drawing board here and make the corrections we need to."

Both Hudson and Lloyd had their good stuff going in the first two innings; between them only one batter reached base, the Tigers' Jake Garella on a walk in the second. In the third, Edwardsville started when Bailey Zimmer walked, and after Joe Wallace struck out, Hovey came to the plate and took an 0-1 pitch deep to left-center to score Zimmer and give the Tigers a 1-0 lead. It quickly became a 2-0 lead when Hudson was called for a balk, forcing in Zimmer.

Collin Clayton then singled by was picked off and tagged out trying to get to second, but Aaron Jackson and Matthew Zielonko stroked hits to score two more runs and put the Tigers ahead 4-0.

Edwardsville – already missing catcher Brock Weimer after he tore the meniscus in his right knee; he was scheduled to have surgery on it Friday - had a scare in the bottom of the fourth, when Hudson hit a ball back to the mound, but it bounced off Lloyd's right hamstring right near the knee. Lloyd was able to make the putout and retired Jacob Kanallakan and Matt Hopkins to end the inning, but it was decided to pull Lloyd and replace him with Garella.

Garella made only one mistake in his three innings of work, giving up a home run to Hudson on a 2-1 count, and the Tigers got it back and more in the top of the seventh, when Clayton led off with a triple and was doubled home by Johnson. One out later, Fahd Shakeel singled in Johnson to make it 6-1. Garella sent the Redbirds down in order in the seventh to end the game.

Johnson ended up going 2-for-3 with a single and double and a RBI. Zielonko was 1-for-4 with a run scored and a RBI, Hudson was 1-for-3 with a homer.

Lloyd was the winner, going four innings and fanning seven while giving up two hits. Hudson took the loss, giving up five hits and four runs while striking out six.

Edwardsville went to 7-0 on the season, 1-0 in the SWC; Alton fell to 6-2 and 0-1.



