

Tigers Score On First Five Possessions, Add 35-Yard Punt Return TD By Brnfre, Take 47-6 Win Over Soldan

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – It didn't take long for Edwardsville's football team to take the lead, scoring on the second play from scrimmage, then scored on their next four possessions and got a punt return touchdown from Kellen Brnfre for the second week in a row in building a 41-0 halftime lead and going on to win over St. Louis Soldan 47-6 in a week three football game played Friday night at Tiger Stadium.

Brnfre, in fact, scored twice in the first half as the Tigers built up their lead over Soldan and never looked back in taking their third win in as many games as Edwardsville gets ready for its Southwestern Conference schedule.

"It's a good feeling, obviously, to get the win," said Tigers' head coach Kelsey Pickering. "But to see us play pretty close to mistake-free, it's something we've talked about. Penalties have been an issue the first two weeks and we have to get that cleaned up. We know our conference and we can't afford mistakes like that."

The Tigers had several players make big plays on the evening and it's something that Edwardsville can count on in the remaining six weeks of the season.

"That's where we feel really good," Pickering said. "We have a lot of guys with the ball in their hand, can do some things. Again, our conference is strong and so, it might even out a little bit. But still, the positives of being able to consistently move the ball. That's something we feel very confident in. That's a nice piece we have."

It's been a perfect start for the Tigers - record-wise, that is. Pickering knows there are still some things that need to be addressed in all three parts of the game and it'll spell the difference when the Southwestern Conference season starts next week.

"Yeah, if you're talking record, that's nice," Pickering said. "We've gotta be better. That's what we know. We always evaluate us first and we've gotta find the ways to clean up mistakes, be more simon-sound, offense, defense and special teams. That's what's going to carry over. We can do all three of those phases well. That's going to be the big difference."

That conference opener takes place next Friday at O'Fallon and it'll be when the fun and games of playing in the Southwestern Conference starts.



It's something Pickering is looking forward to.

"Oh, we love conference play," Pickering said. "Our conference is so strong, it really is. And I think it's what's helped us to always be successful when we make the playoffs, is that our conference gives us a great look. And this year's no different. I think top to bottom, it's really good this year."

The SWC is the kind of league where someone can sneak up and pull a big win over a favorite unexpectedly, and it's not a conference where a team can take a night off and still expect to win.

"There's no weeks off," Pickering said. "You don't start conference play and go 'oh, you know, there's an easy week here.' You don't have those. And so, that's the part our kids know and understand that it doesn't matter who's on our schedule. It's how we go about our business. There's a certain way we do things, there's a way we go about practice, preparation that doesn't change, based on opponent. That's the nice piece and for us, yeah, we get to start conference play. They just become another week for us, because we know how we handle our business."

It only took the Tigers two plays to score the opening touchdown, as on the first possession of the game, quarterback Jake Curry threw 84 yards to Patrick Chism to give Edwardsville a quick 7-0 lead after only 46 seconds. On the next possession, the Tigers took five plays to go 69 yards, with Curry passing 42 yards to Brnfre to put Edwardsville up 14-0. Then after recovering a Soldan fumble deep in their own territory, Curry passed nine yards to Clayton Lakatos for another touchdown to make the score 21-0 near the halfway mark of the first quarter.

On the next Soldan possession, Brnfre intercepted a pass and returned it to the 30, where on the next play, Curry hit Lakatos again for the fourth touchdown of the quarter to make it 28-0. Afterward, Curry hit Zach Williams from 29 yards out to make it 34-0 after the conversion was missed. The Tigers forced Soldan to punt near their goal line on the next possession and Brnfre took the punt 35 yards down the near sidelines for another touchdown, making the score 41-0 at halftime and triggering the running clock rule for the second half.

Soldan took the second-half kickoff and drove 82 yards and took the entire third quarter to do it, climaxing with a six-yard touchdown run from Miguel Lacy to cut the lead to 41-6 after a two-point play was stopped. The Tigers got their final touchdown in the final quarter as quarterback Yale Weaver connected with Gino Montgomery for a 71-yard touchdown pass to make the final 47-6 for the Tigers.

Soldan is now 0-3, while Edwardsville goes to 3-0 and goes to OTHS Panther Stadium next week in the conference opener in a 7 p.m. kickoff. It'll be the first time the Tigers

and Panthers have met since the epic 43-36 Edwardsville win in the first round of the IHSA Class 8A playoffs on Oct. 29, 2022, and Pickering is looking forward to the game.

"Oh, yeah, of course," Pickering said. "I love our conference, I do. We've got great coaches, we've got great players in our conference and it's fun to compete against. I mean, one of the best conferences in the state, in my opinion."





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