

# Explorers Give Up First Half Lead, But Battle Back For Draw With Edwardsville

by Bradley Piros, Reporter  
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ALTON – After a close, action-packed game, both the Marquette Catholic and Edwardsville boys soccer teams had to settle for a draw Saturday afternoon at Gordon Moore Park.

After a scoreless first 15 minutes, the game suddenly got interesting. The Tigers had the first real chance in the 16<sup>th</sup> minute when Jonas Mahler's header hit the post and went out of play after a dangerous corner kick.

A couple of minutes later, Quinn Copeland pounced on an EHS mistake to take the lead. In the 18<sup>th</sup> minute, Edwardsville keeper Zeke Manning tried to play a short pass to one of his defenders. Copeland anticipated the pass nicely and caused a turnover, eventually putting the ball past Manning who was a bit out of position to make it 1-0.

Ryan Klasner's curling shot from distance almost doubled the Marquette lead in the 34<sup>th</sup> minute, but Manning made a nice diving save.

The Explorers went into halftime up 1-0.

Just five minutes back into play, the Tigers tied it. Mahler got on the other end of a rather poorly defended corner kick that rolled almost all the way across the six-yard box where he tapped it home easily at the back post.

Nearly 15 minutes later, Edwardsville took the lead after a stellar counterattack. Marquette had a set piece in a dangerous position, but misplayed it, turning the ball over. The Tigers sprinted the other way with Madj Hamad the one who made a mad dash down center field. A pass made it his way and all he had to do was put it around the keeper to make it 2-1.

The Tigers later drilled the crossbar in the 68<sup>th</sup> minute.

Marquette wasn't done yet. In the 74<sup>th</sup> minute, Copeland did most of the work by keeping the ball in play and getting the cross off toward Justin Fears. He took a great first touch in toward goal, getting around a defender and just barely poking the ball past the outstretched Manning.

The Explorers had tied it back up at 2-2 with five minutes left to play, and that's how it would finish.

"I just liked the character we showed," Marquette head coach Brian Hoener said. "We made a couple of mistakes, and they did what great teams do, punished us for both of our mistakes."

"This is why we play the game," Hoener added. "They're a 3A school, we're a 1A school, but we play the game because playing good teams that are well coached like this will make us better. Regardless of the result today I feel like we got better because we played a really good team today."

As a result, the Tigers move to 6-2-1 on the season while Marquette is 7-1-1. Both teams have rivalry games coming up soon as well.

The Tigers will host Collinsville on Tuesday. The two played an exciting 3-2, overtime game back on Aug. 29.

As for the Explorers, they'll take on the Alton Redbirds and they'll be seeking a little revenge after last year's 2-1 loss after penalties.

"From a coaching standpoint, we try and treat it like any other game," Hoener said about the upcoming rivalry game. "Alton is really good, we don't look at their record or any of that kind of stuff. They're good, they play a very hard schedule. It's going to be another great challenge for us."