

# Schlarman, Cohn, Power Edwardsville Past Belleville 3-1 In Home Hockey Match

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer  
November 10 2023 10:24 AM





EDWARDSVILLE - Dean Schlarman and Zach Cohn scored 43 seconds apart late in the third period as Edwardsville's club hockey team won its season opener 3-1 over Belleville Thursday night at the RP Lumber Center.

The game marked the return of the Tigers to the Mississippi Valley Club Hockey Association, the Metro-East high school league, after a long stint in the Mid-States Club Hockey Association, the lone representative of the Illinois side in the St. Louis-based league. And it was a very good game, indeed, where both goalies - Kai Vetter for the Tigers and Henrik Strubberg of Belleville - stood on their heads and kept both teams in a tight, defensive-minded game until the Tigers late outburst to take their initial two points this season.

"Good, I feel good," said Edwardsville head coach Jason Walker in his postgame interview. "Belleville played great tonight. I give them all credit in the world, their goalie was great, they played physical, they played tough. The first line was tough for us to handle tonight, and our guys just stuck with it, Kai made some big saves and we were able to make enough plays at the end to win."

The change in leagues from the MSCHA to the MVCHA was partly motivated by a chance to play familiar Illinois rivals, but the Tigers will maintain their relationship with the MSCHA by playing a series of teams in charity exhibition games this year.

"Just a multitude of things," Walker said, "but, really, we wanted to continue to play our traditional rivals. like Belleville, Granite (City), O'Fallon and those teams. We haven't had a chance to do that in the last few years. And we're getting an opportunity with the way we set up our schedule to continue to play the Mid-States teams. We play Parkway West here tomorrow, we've got CBC coming up. So we're kind of playing in both leagues, in a way. It gives us an opportunity to play more games."

The first game. last Friday night against Oakville, is a series where the Tigers will play old MSCHA rivals, which will benefit Hockey Fights Cancer, a charity set up by the National Hockey League, and has raised millions of dollars towards finding a cure for cancer.

"The (St. Louis) Blues really stepped up and helped us here, partnered with us on it," Walker said. "We're excited, We raised close to \$11,000 in game one, and hopefully, we can match that tomorrow night and just keep on and keep it going through the nine-game series."



The Tigers, as usual, have high expectations for their season, and it's something that the team always has for themselves.

"We definitely have high expectations, just like we do every year," Walker said. "We have goals we want to accomplish. You can't get too ahead of yourself, but we're one game into the league play and multiple games into our season. We like where we're at, we just got to push and get better."

And as always, the key to a successful season are multiple and Walker is confident in his players that the team will have a big return to the MVCHA.

"I think there's a lot of keys," Walker said. "I think the key to the team this year, compared to previous years, is just experience. We have a lot of older guys, we've had guys who have been here two, three, and some, even their fourth year on the varsity team. So, I think experience is going to be a big help as we push through the season."

The Tigers scored first at 8:21, while on the power play, with Miles Browne off for hooking. Grant Huneke took a great pass in the slot from Joey Viox and snapped a wrist shot in behind Strubberg to give Edwardsville a 1-0 lead. Belleville, whose roster is combined from both Belleville East and Belleville West, tied the game on a nice goal from Rudy Altman, who took a good pass from Barrett Lampe, and put the puck past Vetter at 10:11 to tie the game at 1-1. Nathan Young also assisted on the play.

Both goalies then did their part to keep the game tied through much of the game into the third period, as both Vetter and Strubberg came up big in making key saves to preserve the 1-1 game.

The breakthrough for Edwardsville came with 2:31 left in the game, when Schlarman made a good play to tap the puck past a defender and the goalie, and had a wide-open net to tap into to give the Tigers the lead at 2-1. Atticus Arth made the play to get Schlarman the puck. Just 43 seconds later, with 1:49 to go, Cohn scored to give the Tigers a 3-1 lead, assisted by both Schlarman and Cohn. Vetter then closed the door on Belleville to preserve the Tigers' first win on the season in their return to the MVCHA.

The Tigers meet Parkway West in their second game for Hockey Fights Cancer on Friday night at RP Lumber Center, with a start time of 8:15 p.m. Edwardsville returns to league play with a home game against Bethalto Monday night at 7:30 p.m., then goes up against Alton at the East Alton Ice Arena Tuesday night at 7:45 p.m., then plays Columbia at home Nov. 16 at 7 p.m. Needless to say, Walker is looking ahead to the new season and its possibilities.



"Yeah, looking forward to playing tomorrow night and raising some more money," Walker said, "and to play a good team. Looking forward to it all, so the guys, we're excited today and we'll keep pushing and keep getting better."



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