

Tillman Hits For 18, Martin Adds 13, Makes The Big Contributions As Tigers Win Home Opener Over Glenwood 49-41

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - Junior Herbert Martin was the difference maker for Edwardsville High's boy basketball team as he scored 13 points and made numerous steals on defense in helping the Tigers to a 49-41 win over Chatham Glenwood in the home opener Tuesday night at Lucco-Jackson Gym.

Edwardsville started the season off with a good fourth-place showing at the Decatur Turkey Tournament, going 1-2, and on Tuesday, played well and got key steals and defensive stops, although the Titans mounted a comeback late in the game, but could only get as close as eight at the Tigers took the win.

"I thought our defensive effort was great," Edwardsville head coach Dustin Battas said, "and Herbert Martin was the difference in getting the lead and extending the lead. And we would have liked to have made more shots, and we had a few things at the end; there were some turnovers. Our guys were down about some of those execution things, but it's early. Iose (Epenesa), especially off the football field, we haven't had a ton of practices with all of our guys.

"So, the execution part, we can coach that. I told them I was proud of the effort; that's hard to coach if guys show up and they're not trying hard. The effort was great, I thought we got better on defense since last week when we were up at Decatur. But really proud of Herb; I thought he separated us with stealing the ball and guarding (Mason Marshall)

as good as he did. And then, I thought A.J. (Tillman) had an excellent game, kind of controlled the tempo. We want to push the ball up, play in space, and I thought we shot some threes. I think we'll always do that, we just had a hard time getting some of those threes to fall tonight."

The Tigers were able to get plenty of steals off Glenwood throughout the game, particularly in the second and third quarters, and it was a big help to Edwardsville throughout the game.

"Our guys were prepared," Battas said, "they paid attention in practice and walk-through, and I thought they saw some of the actions and were able to jump some routes on some of the plays regarding in practice. And Herb's just a really good on-the-ball defender. He kind of picked his spots and was just able to, individually, just take the ball, which led to some easy baskets, which was, like I said, a huge advantage to us, and it's how we got the lead."





The Tigers also had a good shooting night and it's something that bodes well for the team as things go along.

"I like our guys, we like the direction we're heading," Battas said. "It's a good group of guys, and we have some experienced guys mixed in with some new guys. We've kind of hit the ground running this year, and try to use the experience of those older guys, speed those younger guys up, and get them used to our schemes and all that. We're a work in progress, but we're really proud of our guys and we're really happy with the effort tonight."

The Tigers scored the first five points of the game off a drive by Tillman, a free throw from Kris Crosby, and a Martin basket, but Marshall hit back-to-back threes to give the Titans a 6-5 lead. The remainder of the quarter was a see-saw affair, with Cameron Appenzaller hitting on a pair of baskets to give Glenwood a 10-7 lead after the first quarter.

Baskets by Epenesa and Martin gave the Tigers the lead back at 11-10, with Tillman hitting a long two to trigger a 7-0 run for Edwardsville that featured a pair of threes by Bryce Pryor and Tillman. The Titans managed to cut the lead to 19-17, with Tillman hitting a pair of shots before the end of the half to give Edwardsville a 25-17 lead at the interval.

An exchange of baskets started the second half, with Martin starting an Edwardsville 8-0 run to lift the Tigers to a 35-19 lead. The Titans countered with a 7-0 run to bring the score back to 35-26, but Tillman hit a runner in the lane right before the third-quarter buzzer to increase the lead to 37-26.

In the fourth quarter, a reverse by Epenesa and a three from Martin gave the Tigers a 43-29 lead, with the Titans going on one last charge in the final minutes, outscoring Edwardsville 12-6, but it was the Tigers coming out on top 49-41.

Tillman led Edwardsville with 18 points, while Martin had 13. Donovan Coates had five points, Epenesa had four points, and Pryor, Crosby, and Miccah Butler all scored three points.

Glenwood is now 1-1 on the year, while the Tigers are 2-2 and open their Southwestern Conference slate on Friday night at home against a vastly improved Alton side at 7:30 p.m.

The Tigers then play at O'Fallon next Tuesday and host Belleville East on Dec. 8, both games starting at 7:30 p.m. Battas is looking ahead to playing a very good Redbird team that's hitting its stride.

"Yeah, Alton's going to be a tough out, there's no doubt," Battas said. "They're much improved and coach (Dylan) Dudley will do a good job. We'll have to watch some film tonight until the early morning, get a game plan together that gives us a chance to win, and have a good two days of practice. Good win against a well-coached team and looking forward to Friday night."



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