

# **Allen Leads With 23 Points, Three Others Hit 13 Points, Tigers Dominate In 80-34 Win Over Gateway STEM**

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer  
December 12 2023 8:54 AM





EDWARDSVILLE – Forward Malik Allen had this third big game in a row with a 23-point performance, while three other players scored 13 points each as Edwardsville led from start to finish in taking an 80-34 win over Gateway STEM, a St. Louis City magnet school, in a boys basketball game played Monday night at Lucco-Jackson Gym,

The Tigers put up 28 points in the first quarter and never looked back in playing their first of four straight games against Missouri opposition, which also gives Edwardsville a chance to see teams from across the Mississippi River and play against different styles of basketball.

“I think they’re 4-1, and I know (Ben Dura) and (Leon Harris), (Dura’s) averaging 27 points a game the other (Harris) averages 22 points a game, I thought we were going to have our hands full, but our guys did a good job defensively of taking those two guys away, and making it hard for the other guys to score,” Edwardsville head coach Dustin Battas said.

“Then getting out to an early lead, made some threes against their zone, which always helps. We shot the ball well, but we had nine or 10 assists at halftime, which is a great stat that we track, So we’re sharing the ball well, and guys were carrying over what we practiced, which is always a bonus.”

Getting the chance to play St. Louis City competition has always been a hallmark of the Tigers' program, and Battas always welcomes the chance to play against different styles of basketball.

"We always like playing St. Louis City schools," Battas said. "They're tough, they're competitive and really enjoy playing us. They always are appreciative, we love hosting them and even going down to St. Louis when we can and competing with those teams over there. So tomorrow's going to be at home, Friday's a neutral site. It's a good brand of basketball, and it makes us have to play a little bit differently than we get to play in our league. Like I said, I think it makes us better, because of the toughness those schools play with."







A big benefit of the score was that the Tigers were able to use their bench in the fourth quarter, giving the players who don't normally see playing time a reward for all of their hard work during practice sessions.

"It's a good reward," Battas said. "Those guys work really hard and deserve playing time. It's hard to come by as competitive as our schedule is. So, that's like an honor grade you can give, get some guys some opportunities to play, and some guys who do a good job behind the scenes in practice. It's always a good reward, and we always feel good as a team to get those guys in and out. I always appreciate how hard our guys cheer for each other and kind of rally around each other. It was great to see our senior, SaDonald West, get in there and make a couple of free throws at the end."

The two teams exchanged baskets to start the game, then A.J. Tillman hit in the lane and Allen sank a three to give Edmondsville a 7-2 advantage. After a Dura basket made it 7-4, the Tigers went on a 21-4 run to end the period, led by Allen, Donovan Coates, and Kris Crosby, as Edmondsville led after the first quarter 28-8.

Gavin Dillon scored at the start of the second for the Jaguars, followed by a basket from Shakaïd Zevulun to make it 28-12, with Edmondsville going on a 21-10 surge for the rest of the quarter, led once again by Allen and Tillman, with Miccah Butler also scoring, giving the Tigers a 49-22 halftime lead.

Tillman, Allen and Iose Epenesa led the charge in the third quarter as the Tigers continued to build their lead, using a quick defense and converting on chances to make the score 68-30 after three quarters, which also kicked in the fourth quarter running clock rule.

The Tigers used the quarter to get their reserve players in, including West, Brandon Hoffmann, Tucker Lindstedt, Rowan Weller, and Devyon Hill-Lomax, among others. The Tigers went on to their 80-34 win.

Allen led the Edwardsville scoring with 23 points, while Tillman, Coates, and Butler all had 13 points each. Crosby finished with nine points, Epenesa had six points, Hoffmann scored two points, and West had a single point.

Harris led the Jaguars with 12 points, while both Dura and Dillon hit for eight points each, Zevulun had four points, and Eric Bland had two points.

Gateway STEM is now 4-4 on the year, while Edwardsville goes to 4-3 and continues their St. Louis portion of the schedule Tuesday night at home against Roosevelt in a 7:30 p.m. start, then plays against St. Mary's Southside Catholic in the Carbondale Shootout Friday at 5 p.m.

Then, the Tigers take on Riverview Gardens of north St. Louis County Dec. 18 in another 7:30 p.m. start before playing in the Mary Institute-Country Day Holiday Invitational Dec. 27-29 at MICDS in Ladue, Mo.



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