

# **Semith Leads With 16 Points, Solid Defense, Especially In Second Half, Helps Give Tigers 58-36 Win Over Kahoks**

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer  
January 5 2024 8:28 AM





EDWARDSVILLE - Mia Semith led the way for Edwardsville with 16 points, with the Tigers taking control in the second half, especially in the third quarter, playing solid defense in going on to a 58-36 win over Collinsville in a Southwestern Conference girls basketball game Thursday night at Lucco-Jackson Gym.

The Tigers led 21-15 at halftime, but used their defense and a 10-2 run early in the third quarter to go further ahead, then went on a 9-0 run late in third and the start of the fourth to all but put the game away, as Edwardsville extended its winning streak to four.

"Pretty good," said Edwardsville head coach Bryan Young. "I thought the first half, we didn't play horrible, the shots weren't falling and we played pretty good defense. So I told them at halftime just stick with it, the shots are going to fall. And that's what happened."

The Tigers broke open a close game in the second half with their defense and shots that began to fall.

"Well, like I said, we talked at halftime about the shots that weren't falling," Young said, "but our defense would stick with it. So, I thought we picked up the pressure on defense, and turned them over a few times, got some easy baskets and turned the game around."



The Tigers' defense was very important, as Kahoks' start Talesha Gilmore was able to score 17 points, and was a presence on the inside.

"She's low in there," Young said. "We had the game plan to try front her, and get some help behind. Mia and Blakely (Hockett) did a good job of fronting her. Mia actually challenged herself. She said 'Blakely, I want her.' It was good to see that. They both worked hard and defended her well."

Although Semith and Hockett were able to play well against Gilmore, she still came up with her 17 points to lead all scorers.

"Yeah, she's good," Young said. "She's a load down there. She gets that ball and she keeps it up. She's real long, springy and explosive. She can cause you some problems."

Gilmore had carried most of the load for the Kahoks and has vastly improved her overall game this season.

"Talesha's improved a ton," said Collinsville head coach Colin Moore. "If you watch her in practice every day, you can see how much more room there is for improvement. But she does a lot of good things on the court, and she's a good teammate, she's a good kid. We're just hoping she can eventually find that net gear and take it to the next level."

Overall, Young was very happy with the Tigers' effort as the Tigers continued to turn things around as the second half gets underway.

"Yeah, I am," Young said. "I thought Ellie (Neath) played well. She really controlled the game. I thought Ellie kept her composure, she took control on the court. Molly Peel had some big threes; she came in and hit three big threes there in the second half, and kind of turned this around, too. So, that was good to see."

The four-game winning streak has the Tigers feeling good and feeling more confident as the season goes on.

"Well, we've got a little bit different competition," Young said. "But right now, I'm just happy to be winning. Like I said, anytime you get a chance to win some games, it builds confidence, and look forward to the next one."

The Tigers held a 4-2 lead, behind baskets by Hockett and Neath, countering a Gilmore basket, during the first five-plus minutes, but late in the first quarter, Semith knocked down a three and also hit a pair of free throws to give Edwardsville a 9-2 lead, while Gilmore scored again in the paint and Neath hit a pair of free throws to give the Tigers an 11-4 lead after the first.

In the second, points still were hard to come by, as the Tigers held a 13-5 lead, but later on, Peel hit a key three to give Edwardsville a 20-11 lead, but Ella Guerrero countered with a basket and Gilmore scored to cut the lead to 20-15 before a free throw gave the Tigers a 21-15 lead at halftime.

After a Gilmore basket cut the lead to 21-17 at the start of the second half, Edwardsville started on a 10-0 run, with a Semith basket, a three from Peel and a three-point play and another basket by Neath pushing the lead to 31-17. The Tiger lead fluctuated between 12 and 14 points after an extended exchange of baskets, before baskets from both Semith and Neath gave Edwardsville a 40-24 lead after three.

A basket by Neath and a three from Semith at the start of the fourth quarter extended the Tiger lead to 45-24, and from there, the Tigers used their defense and big baskets to go on to their 58-36 win over Collinsville.

To go along with Semith's 16 points, Neath added 13 points, Hockett hit for nine points, Sophie Shapiro scored six points, Layne Logan and Gabby Cook had two points each, and Lainey McFarlin scored a single point.

Gilmore led the Kahoks with her 17 points, while Guerrero hit for seven points, Carsyn Moad scored four points, and Katie Bardwell, Karley Call, Lily Carlisle and Danajah Willis all had two points each.

The Kahoks are now 8-8 and next play at Waterloo on Monday, are at Alton on Tuesday and host Belleville East on Jan. 11, with all games starting at 7:30 p.m. The Tigers go to 7-9 and play against Wentzville, Mo., Hold in a shootout at St. Joseph's Academy in Frontenac, Mo., on Saturday at 2:30 p.m, then host Belleville West on Tuesday and Alton on Jan. 11, both games starting at 7:30 p.m.



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