

Allen Leads With 19 Points, Tigers Hit Big Free Throws Down The Stretch To Take 55-53 Win Over Belleville West

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - Malik Allen led Edwardsville with 19 points, as the Tigers executed well down the stretch, hitting key free throws in the final minutes to take a 55-53 win over Belleville West in a closely-contested Southwestern Conference boys basketball game Tuesday night at Lucco-Jackson Gym.

The Tigers won their second straight game, coming after their big win over Collinsville last Friday night, and are now 12-6, while the Maroons go to 7-10. The win didn't come easy, as West battled throughout.

"We had to do a lot of things well to pull that game out tonight," said Edwardsville head coach Dustin Battas. "Belleville West is fast, made some perimeter shots, and guarded us good. I thought our guys really competed hard and had great effort. A.J. (Tillman) got a big charge on a late possession, and was outstanding down the stretch, making his free throws. Malik was able to shoot them out of their zone, and our guys did a good job of finding him.

"Iose (Epenesa) had a few huge baskets for us in the second half," Battas also said. "Donovan (Coates) made some big baskets for us in the first half to keep us in it, and gave us the lead at the half. Herbert (Martin) also had a big steal and layup at the buzzer of the second quarter to give us some momentum heading into the locker room. Kris (Crosby) was outstanding late on their leading scorer, (Myles) Liddell. He really made it

hard for Liddell to score. We are proud of all our guys, and look forward to competing at Alton later in the week."



The Maroons started out very well and held an 18-15 lead after the first quarter, with the Tigers rallying and going ahead at halftime 31-27. The Maroons fought back and took a 42-39 lead after three quarters, but Edwardsville outscored West in the final quarter 16-11 to take home the win.

Allen led the Tigers with 19 points, while Coates scored 13 points and Tillman had 12 points. Liddell led the Maroons with 15 points, while Brandon Scott added 13 points, Jordan Lacey hit for nine points, and David Marshall, Jr. scored eight points.

The Tigers go to Alton to take on the Redbirds on Friday night in a 7:30 p.m. tip, then compete in the Jersey Mid-Winter Classic the week of Jan.15-21, meeting the host Panthers, Cahokia, and Granite City during the round-robin tournament.



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