

Semith, Shapiro Both Score 13 Points, Tigers Girls Dominate Kahoks

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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COLLINSVILLE - Both Mia Semith and Sophie Shapiro led Edwardsville with 13 points each, with a 13-0 run in the first and second quarter leading the Tigers to a 38-12 stretch in the middle two quarters in a 60-26 win over Collinsville in a Southwestern Conference game played on Tuesday night at Vergil Fletcher Gym.

The Tigers broke open a 14-12 lead late in the opening quarter in going on their run, which led to a 34-14 halftime lead, as the Tigers went on to their win. Edwardsville also played very well defensively, totally shutting down the Kahoks, and also holding one of the St. Louis area's leading scorers, Talesha Gilmore, to two points on the night.

"I'm feeling pretty good," said Tigers' head coach Bryan Young. "We've been talking about playing defense, and I thought the girls bought into that. The last couple of games, we've been talking and preaching defense, and they went out and got after it."

The defensive effort was tremendous for Edwardsville, particularly after a big effort in the previous game at Civic Memorial, where the Tigers gave the Eagles their worst loss in six years last Saturday afternoon.

"Yeah, that was pretty impressive," Young said. "But our girls, we've got two girls out there, with Sophie and (Ellie) Neath, they get out there and guard people. And then, you've got Blakely (Hockett). Blake is athletic; I thought she did a really good job on

(Gilmore) tonight, I think holding her to two points, that might be the lowest of the season. Blakely went out and guarded her tough, and then, we had people helping her out on her. So, that was good."





It was an overall team win for the Tigers, which puts them back above the break-even mark for this season, and it was important, with the final games of the regular season coming up, and the IHSA Class 4A playoffs coming up soon. The Tigers are ready for the final push.

"Yeah, we are, we are," Young said. "We've got a couple of games left here, to get ready for the postseason. But, I'm excited to see how we end up. Our girls have been practicing hard. I told them again to trust the process."

Although it has been a difficult season for the Tigers, Young is very proud of his players for hanging in and continuing to work hard.

"Yeah, I'm so proud of them," Young said. "As I said, they've stuck together. And I was looking today, not any of our losses came from an unranked team. So. most of the teams we've played are at least in the top 15 of their class. I'm pretty proud of the girls for fighting through that, and playing hard."

The Kahoks kept plugging and playing hard, to their credit, and kept fighting and playing hard, despite the difficulties Edwardsville presented.

"You know, I told the girls during one time out I felt like there were only a couple of plays was purely lack of effort," said Collinsville head coach Colin Moore. "I'd say a lot of it was Edwardsville's ability to pressure. We just had nobody outside Ella (Guerrero) to step up and handle the ball. Some girls tried, but it put them in weird spots, and not being able to handle the ball gave them so many easy baskets, that just doesn't allow us to get up and down the court. And once their defense is set up, it's hard for us to get the ball into Talesha. She's getting double and triple teamed, foul, not fouled, whatever it is, it just makes the game very difficult for our team."

After an exchange of baskets to start off the game, Lainey McFarlin hit a three, and Semith hit inside to give the Tigers a 7-2 lead. Carsyn Moad sank a three to pull the Kahoks to within 7-5, and later on, Gilmore hit on a second chance to tie the game at 9-9. Shapiro hit a three to put Edwardsville up 12-9, and afterwards, Moad hit a three on top of the key to cut the lead to 14-12. It would be as close as the Kahoks would get, as the Tigers scored the last three points of the quarter to go up 17-12, then scored the first 10 points of the second quarter to take a 27-12 lead. A Guerrero basket ended the run to make it 27-14, but a three by McFarlin, and baskets by both Hockett and Gabby Cook gave the Tigers a 34-14 lead at halftime.

Edwardsville scored the first four points of the second half, before another Moad three cut the lead to 38-17. after which, the Tigers outscored Collinsville 17-7 to put the score after the third quarter to 55-24, triggering the fourth quarter running clock rule. Edwardsville outscored the Kahoks in the fourth quarter 5-2 to give the 60-26 win.

Both McFarlin and Shapiro scored 13 points each to lead the Tigers, while Semith had 11 points, Cook hit for seven points, Hockett scored six points, Neath had five points, Kaylee Hauschild hit for two points, and Lydia Struble scored a single point.

Moad led the Kahoks with 11 points, while Guerrero scored nine points, and Danajah Willis, Ashley Janini and Gilmore all scored two points each.

The Tigers go to 13-12, and are at East St. Louis on Thursday, before hosting Granite City on Friday, play at Rochester on Monday, and conclude the regular season at home on Feb. 8 against Belleville West, all games also starting at 7:30 p.m.

The Kahoks host Centralia on Thursday night, and Father McGivney Catholic at 3:30 p. m. on Saturday, then play at Jersey next Monday night.





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