

McFarlin, Semith Lead With 10 Points Each, Tigers Win Regular Season Finale Over Maroons 53-13

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - Lainey McFarlin and Mia Semith both led Edwardsville with 10 points each, as the Tigers scored the game's first seven points in 66 seconds, holding Belleville West to two points in the first half – both coming in the opening quarter - as the Tigers won their regular season finale over the Maroons 53-13 Thursday night at Lucco-Jackson Gym.

The game also served as the annual Tigers' Senior Night game, and both seniors - Molly Peel and Olivia Kolnsberg - and their families were honored, saluted, and thanked for all of their contributions to the program. Afterward, the Tigers scored the game's first 19 points, and had little trouble in extending their regular season-ending winning streak to seven over the Maroons.

"The kids are working hard," said Edwardsville head coach Bryan Young. "I think they're looking forward to the challenge of the postseason. It's a good way to end the season for Molly and Olivia, too. They're playing a Belleville West team, they've got some players, but it was a good win."

One of the highlights of the game was a three by Kolnsberg that she wanted to take, and was able to hit on the shot, sending the Tigers' bench wild with delight.

"We were giving her a hard time, because the last couple of games, we wanted to give her a three," Young said with a smile and a laugh, "and she said she was going to shoot one tonight. She shot it, and it made all of us happy."





Peel has the green light to shoot threes whenever she can, and she was able to take full advantage of it in the game, despite missing two days of practice time, due to injury.

"Molly always has the green light," Young said. "She can shoot and she had a good night, too."

The seven-game winning streak is important, as the Tigers now go into the IHSA Class 4A playoffs, where they will play Monday night at Collinsville against the host Kahoks in the regional. The winner faces the winner of the first semifinal between top-seeded Alton and Granite City next Friday night. The win gives Edwardsville the momentum going into the game against Collinsville.

"I like that they're really coming together," Young said. "Each game, we've seen some different contributions by different people. Mia's probably our leading scorer, but outside from Mis, we're getting a little mix-up. Some nights, it's Sophie (Shapiro) that's second in scoring, some nights, it's Lainey. I like the mixture we've got. Blakely (Hockett) out there playing defense. they're really coming together."

The Tigers opened the scoring with a three from Semith, and back-to-back steals and scores by Peel and Ellie Neath in the opening 66 seconds made it quickly 7-0 for the Tigers, who kept their run going after a West time out with a pair of Semith free throws,

a basket by Peel and a three from Semith to make it 14-0. Another basket from Semith and a three from McFarlin made it 19-0 before the Maroons got on the board on a pair of free throws by Moriah Nurie, making the score 19-2. The Tigers got baskets from McFarlin and Hockett to put the lead at 23-2 after the first quarter.

The Tigers shut out the Maroons in the second, starting with three of four free throws from Hockett and a basket by Shapiro to extend the lead to 28-2. Edwardsville got baskets from Shapiro, McFarlin, another three from McFarlin and a basket from Neath to make the halftime score 37-2.

West finally got its first basket of the game from J'La Sparks 1:24 into the second half to make the score 37-4, and later on in the period, Peel hit five points in a row, making the score 42-4, while another basket from Sparks, a basket by Mellakya Wright and a free throw from Milayna Lewis, sandwiched around Kolnsberg's three that sent the house into a mini-frenzy, made the score 49-9 after three quarters. Lewis scored the basket in the fourth quarter brought West in double figures, but the Maroons could only score two more points, as the Tigers hit for the final score of 35-13.

McFarlin, who was also leading scorer in the Tigers' Tuesday night win over Rochester, and Semith led Edwardsville with 10 points each, while Peel scored nine points, Shapiro scored eight points, Hockett had seven points, Neath had four points, Kolnsberg had three points, and Kaylee Hauschild had two points.

Sparks and Nurie led the Maroons with four points each, while Lewis had three points and Cora Sinn scored two points.

The Maroons conclude the regular season at 4-24, and play against the host Panthers in the O'Fallon regional at the OTHS Panther Dome Monday night at 6 p.m., while the Tigers wind up at 17-12 and face the Kahoks at Vergil Fletcher Gym for the third time this season Monday night at 7:30 p.m.



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