

Semith Leads With 19 Points, Peel Adds 11, Tigers Use Two Critical Runs To Eliminate Collinsville 59-35 In 4A Regional

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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COLLINSVILLE - Mia Semith led the way for Edwardsville with 19 points, while Molly Peel added 11 points as the Tigers used two critical runs of 22-5 in the first quarter, then after the Kahoks had pulled to within eight, outscored Collinsville 22-6 to take a 59-35 win over the Kahoks in the second semifinal of the IHSA Class 4A girls basketball Collinsville regional Monday night at Vergil Fletcher Gym.

The Tigers extended their season-long winning streak to eight in defeating the Kahoks for the second time in nearly two weeks, and the third time this season in eliminating Collinsville and advancing to Friday night's final against Alton.

"Feeling pretty good," said Edwardsville head coach Bryan Young. "Like I told the girls, we've got to win tonight to get to Friday. So, we took care of business tonight, and look forward to Friday night."

The runs that the Tigers had spelled the difference in the game, and Young knew that it would be a game of runs, with Edwardsville going on its game-clinching run in the third quarter, and extending it into the fourth.

"We knew they'd come out with some runs," Young said. "We got on one, and they'd bounce back. And then, we came back. Like I said, I kept reminding the girls that we've got the lead, still. That's all we needed, was the lead. We've got the lead, so don't panic

and lose the lead. So, they did a good job of maintaining their composure, and I knew they had their runs in them, and they did. They got a run on us, and then, we kept our composure and got the lead right back."

And the reward for keeping their composure is a final against Alton on Friday night, and it's a game Young is looking forward to.





"Yeah, it's Alton on Friday," Young said. "Like I said, I'm looking forward to that. It's going to be a chance for us to try to beat them. They're a tough opponent, we know that. So, we're going to go in tomorrow, try to work out some things, the coaches and I are going to talk and see what we can get done."

Freshman Kennedy Giesecking had a breakout game, providing quality minutes for the Tigers, but the veteran leadership shined through for Edwardsville.

"I thought Mia really played good defense tonight," Young said. "She played good defense, and when she plays defense, we can win. She was out guarding good. Obviously, when we needed that basket, we went to her. But we played some pretty good defense. I thought Ellie Neath stood out, Sophie (Shapiro's) defense is always good; she played good. I thought it was, really, not one individual person, but a total team effort."

The game started out with Collinsville taking a 4-0 lead on baskets by Lily Carlisle and Katie Bardwell, but a basket by Semith and a three from Shapiro gave the Tigers a 5-4 lead. That started the first Edwardsville run, with Semith scoring back-to-back, the second when she intercepted the inbounds pass after her first basket, to give the Tigers a 9-4 lead, forcing a Kahok time out. Free throws from Peel, a basket from Olivia Kolnsberg and a three-point play from Semith extended the lead to 16-4, before a Karly

VanDyke basket cut the lead to 16-6. The Tigers outscored Collinsville in the remainder of the quarter 6-1 to take a 22-7 lead after one.

A pair of Talesha Gilmore free throws and a three from VanDyke cut the lead to 22-12 to open the second quarter, with VanDyke scoring again, then Carsyn Moad hit a free throw to bring the Kahoks to within 22-15. It sparked the Tigers to go on an 11-1 run throughout the remainder of the period, with baskets from Peel and Semith, along with a three from Neath, the key plays as the Tigers went ahead at halftime 33-16.

An exchange of points and baskets helped the Tigers go in front 37-19 to start the second half, with the Kahoks getting a three from Ella Guerrero and a basket from Gilmore to cut the Tiger lead to 37-29. After an Edwardsville time-out, Gieseke hit a pair of big baskets to help the Tigers to a 41-32 lead at three-quarter time.

In the fourth quarter, a Neath basket pushed the Tigers to a 44-31 advantage, and from there, Edwardsville went on a 15-4 run to finish the game, getting a basket from Semith to make it 51-31, with the Tigers getting free throws along the way to finish the 59-35 win to advance to the final.

To go along with Semith's 19 points and Peel's 11 points, Edwardsville had Neath score eight points, Lainey McFarlin came up with seven points, Gieseke had six points, Blakely Hockett and Shapiro each hit for three points, and Kolnsberg had two points.

Gilmore led the Kahoks with 13 points, while Guerrero had five points, Danajah Willis, Moad, and Ashley Janini all scored four points each, and Carlisle and VanDyke each had two points apiece.

Collinsville ends its season at 12-18, while the Tigers go to 18-12, moving on to the final against the Redbirds, an 83-15 winner over Granite City in the first semifinal, Friday night at 6 p.m. The winner advances to the Normal Community sectional, where they'll play either Quincy or O'Fallon, who won their semifinal games in the Panthers' regional, next Tuesday, Feb. 20, in a neutral-site game in the semifinals, with the site and time to be announced.





[Dalton Brown also contributed to this story.](#)