



Jillian Lane Is Key Returnee For Edwardsville Softball Team, Is A Tigers' Female Athlete Of Month

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - Senior outfielder Jillian Lane is one of the top returning players for Edwardsville High's girls softball team, and is prepared to help the Tigers have another big season in 2024.

Last year, Lane hit an even .400 for the team, with one home run and 31 RBIs, and delivered many key hits that helped Edwardsville to a 30-7 record and a trip to the IHSA Class 4A Sweet Sixteen, where the Tigers lost the sectional final to Bradley Bourbonnais 6-3 at Normal Community High.

For her final season, she feels very confident the Tigers will have another big season, and that preseason practice has gone very well so far, as Edwardsville prepares for its season opener on Mar. 12 at home against Freeburg.

"I think it's been going really well," Lane said during an interview conducted during the preseason workouts. "I've been working hard, getting in a lot of work, and I'm really confident in our team this year. I really think we're going to show up and show out," she said.

After another very good season for the Tigers in 2023, Lane is hoping to repeat the success of last year, and possibly even better.

"I definitely think we're going to do just as good, maybe better, than last year," Lane said. "We've lost two seniors (Avery Hamilton and Zoie Boyd), but there's a lot of quality in those seniors. Most of our roster has, like, one year under their belt, so I think we all have experience, and we're pretty good."

Although the Tigers lost both Hamilton and Boyd to graduation, there's still plenty of talent and depth that's returned to the team, and Lane is looking ahead to the season opener against the Midgets.

"Yes," Lane said. "We have some seniors this year that can definitely take over and be leaders. But Tuesday, we're very excited, because two good programs going at it for the season opener, and it should be a good game."

Lane expects the team to play solid softball throughout the season, with much of the new talent mixing with the veterans to produce good softball.

"I think you're going to see a lot of new talent," Lane said, "but some of the same. You're going to see a lot of good defense and offense, and a lot of energy as well."

Along with a team that's solid in the fundamentals, too.

"We definitely are very fundamental," Lane said. "We make our plays, and make sure we have the basics down."

As far as individual goals for herself, Lane helps the club as much as possible and provides leadership, and improving daily.

"I just have goals to just to provide for the team as best as I could," Lane said, "be a leader, and make sure we're all held accountable and get better every day."

For the Tigers, it's all about making positive connections between teammates and have fun.

"I just hope we can have all the same connection that we did in years past," Lane said, "and just get better and learn every day."

It's an important part of the Tiger teams over the years, where everyone has fun, gets along with each other, and welcomes new players with open arms.

"Oh, yeah, we're definitely out here to have fun," Lane said. "It's so nice we're able to have seniors get along with freshmen. I mean, anyone gets along with anybody, and we're all here to have fun, that's all. We're very confident in our team, because I've seen our ability in practice. I'm very excited to see what comes."

Lane has a word for fans and others to watch out for with the Tigers this coming season.

"I'm going to say be ready for a show this year," Lane said with a hearty smile.