



Edwardsville Scores Seven Runs In Decisive Fifth Inning, Takes Six Inning 12-2 Win Over Granite City

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – The Edwardsville High baseball team took advantage of a number of Granite City wild pitches and passed balls to score seven runs in the bottom of the fifth inning to break the game open, going on to a 12-2 win over the Warriors in a game played Wednesday afternoon at Tom Pile Field.

The Tigers scored their seven runs on only one hit, as Edwardsville was able to bounce back nicely from a 9-5 loss at DeSmet Jesuit on Tuesday.

“Well, we have a team that’s just going to continue to get better each day,” said Edwardsville head coach Tim Funkhouser, “and we were able to get the W today, and we feel good about that. Our process of trying to get better each day is going to be our driving force. We’re just trying to do that, and it’ll be fun to have the season that way.”

Although the Tigers are now 3-2, as are the Warriors, it’s a good way to get the season started, as Edwardsville was able to take advantage of opportunities that the Tigers couldn’t at DeSmet.

“Yesterday, it was a little tougher,” Funkhouser said, “because we had outhit the other team 16-5, and somehow, got outscored 9-5. So, we took some really good at-bats, and

then we kind of gave away an at-bat and created two outs. Then, we just didn't make a few pitches, make a few plays in the field when we needed to, and that led to deciding the game.

"But I think our guys have been practicing well, preparing well, and as we learn how to play game speed, we'll see better success on the field," Funkhouser continued. "I think we did some things that went well today, and I think we're growing each day. So it's a fun time of the year to see what you need to work on, try to attack it, and try to attack it in practice, or even make game adjustments."

The Warriors ran out of pitchers on Wednesday, which helped create the seven-run fifth inning. Granite kept plugging away and played hard, much to their credit.

"I mean, a lot of positives today," said Warrior head coach Scott Smallie. "We swung the bat well, we had a good approach at the plate, we get the bases loaded in the top of the first, and we hit a hard ground ball, a double play, they make the play, and we get a run out of it. We come in and put up a zero, they battle back and scratched across a run. They took the lead for good, and we just kind of ran out of pitching. We had three games this week, and we had to use more guys than we thought. It's no excuse, by any means, but they put bats on balls, we didn't make pitches, and that was it."





The Warriors have lost their last two in a row after starting out 3-0, losing to both Alton and the Tigers, two good quality teams, and Smallie will gladly take that start.

"We're 3-2 right now, we'll take that," Smallie said. We're where we thought we were going to be. Alton is a regional team, and they played well last night. Edwardsville's always one of the top teams in the state, if not the top team in the state. We've just got to make sure that we're doing things, and getting back to practice tomorrow, and just get better."

Smallie is very confident that there are still some good things ahead for his team.

"Yeah, absolutely," Smallie said. "This team has got a lot more wins ahead of them. We've got a tough stretch coming up in the next five, or six games, and it's going to show who we are over the next couple of weeks, for sure. The confidence is there. Like I said. The approach to the plate's good, defensively, we've got to shore some things up, and pitching-wise, we've just got hit a few more spots, and we'll be where we need to be."

The Warriors got on the board first in the opening inning when Nathan Hopper singled, and both Ethan Budde and Luke Haddix drew walks. Aiden Harris grounded into a double play, but Hopper scored to give Granite a 1-0 lead. Edwardsville equalized in the second, starting with a Chase Alwardt lead-off single, advanced to second and third on

passed balls, and with two outs, scored on a Kolton Wright RBI single to tie the game 1-1.

Edwardsville took the lead in the third, starting when the left fielder dropped a fly ball hit by Evan Moore, allowing him to reach third, Greyson Rathgeb walked, and Lucas Krebs hit a sacrifice fly to center, scoring Moore and Rathgeb taking third. A Lucas Huebner double and a Max Waltenberger single scored two more runs to give Edwardsville a 4-1 lead.

In the top of the fifth, Hopper hit a lead-off triple to center, and Budde drove him in with a single to left to cut the Tiger lead to 4-2.

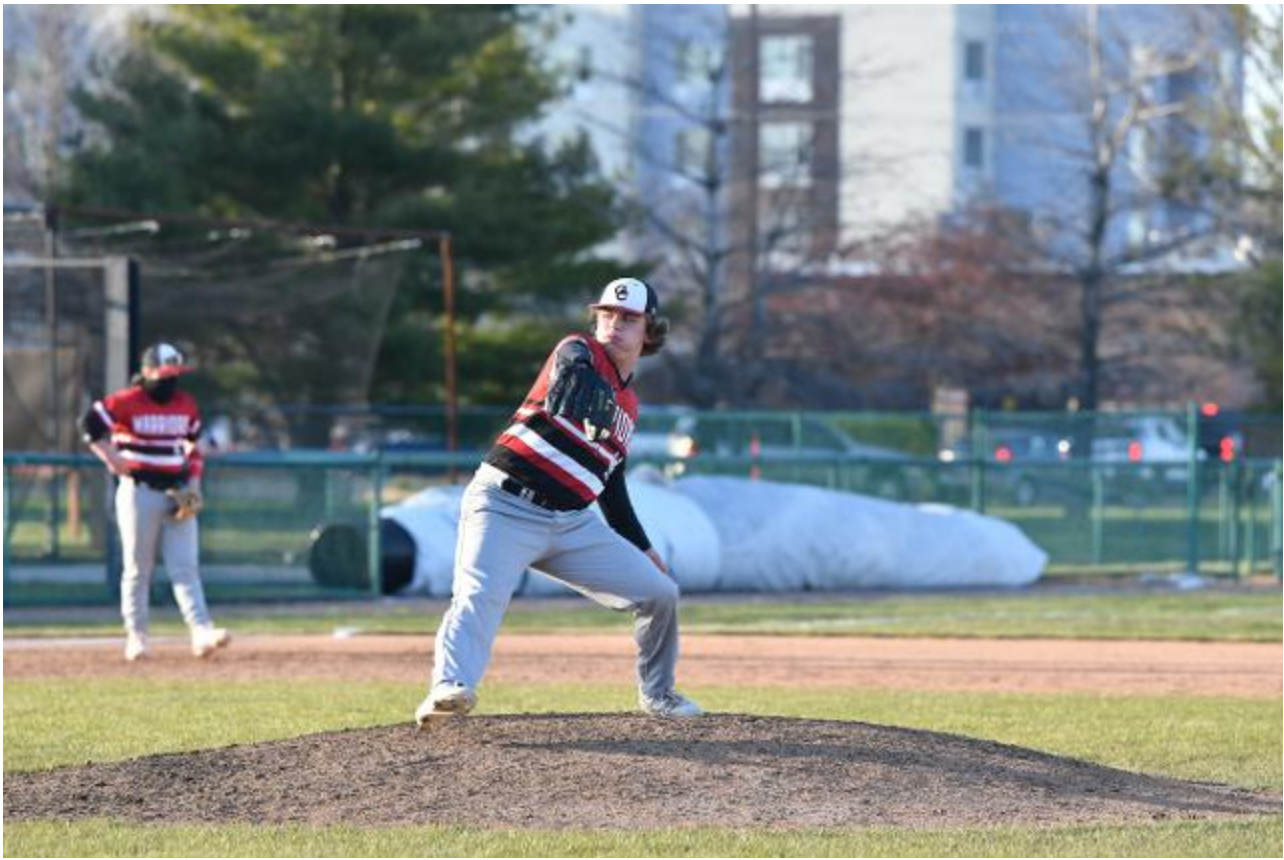
In the bottom of the fifth, Rathgeb, Krebs, and Huebner all walked to lead off the inning, loading the bases, with Alwardt grounding to first, driving home Rathgeb to make it 5-2. A two-run single by Waltenberger extended the lead to 7-2, and a series of walks, wild pitches, and passed balls allowed four more runs to score to make it 11-2.

The game ended in the sixth, with a lead-off walk to Bryce Beyers, and an Alwardt double down the right field line that scored Beyers to make the final 12-2, the game terminated by the 10-run rule.

Tyler Powell was the starter for Edwardsville in the game and went two innings, followed by Chase Milburn in relief for three innings, Eric Heyman tossed two-thirds of an inning and Tristan McMean was the closer.

Both teams are now 3-2, with the Warriors having much-needed time off before playing at Belleville East on Monday afternoon, then have a week off until hosting Highland on April 1, and Quincy on April 3. All games are set to start at 4:30 p.m.

The Tigers host Sacred Heart-Griffin Monday at 4:30 p.m., then play in the Hoover Invitational starting next Thursday against Houston of Germantown, Tenn, at 2 p.m.



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