Edwardsville's baseball team pushes mark to 24-1 with win over Belleville East

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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Earlier in the season, Edwardsville had to squeeze out a narrow win over Belleville East on the road.

The Lancers had their return Southwestern Conference baseball match with Tigers at Tom Pile Field Tuesday afternoon, and the result was anything but a squeaker.

The Tigers brushed off a slow start and pounded out a 13-hit attack on Lancer ace Brady Schanuel and two relievers in taking a 15-2, four-and-a-half inning win, with Mitchell Krebs highlighting the day with a two-double, six-RBI effort at the plate.

"I was seeing the ball pretty well." Krebs said. "They've got a good team over there; I was just ready to go today. We got to (Schanuel) early."

"I'm happy for him," said Tiger coach Tim Funkhouser. "He's had some really big defensive plays for us all year, so seeing him get some good at-bats and doing things with power was really good to see.

"He helped turn a big double play out there today and he's been doing stuff like that all year. Seeing him getting some offensive production, that was great."

While this wasn't one of the Lancers' best-ever games, the ability for them to put it out of their minds quickly and get ready for the next game should help, though East coach Todd Blomberg wasn't exactly thrilled with the outcome. "Our pitching was terrible today," Blomberg said. "You can't let the bottom part of the order do the things that happened to us today. We hit the ball pretty well and had some good at-bats, but our pitchers didn't compete at all today.

"That's baseball though. We just need to put this out of our minds quickly, have a short memory and try to get better tomorrow, have a good day of practice."

Edwardsville got the early lead in the second, thanks to singles by Matt Zielonko and Jake Garella to open the inning. Fahd Shakeel then doubled in a run and Joe Wallace walked to load up the bases before Krebs walked to bring in another run. One out later, Collin Clayton reached on an error to bring in a third run, but Wallace was thrown out at the plate to end the threat.

East got one run back in the top of the third when back-to-back doubles from Drew Miller and Schanuel brought in a run, but the Tigers countered with four more runs in the bottom of the inning, starting when Aaron Jackson doubled and came home on a Garella double. Bailey Zimmer and Wallace then drew one-out walks off reliever Alex Phillips, bringing up Krebs, who stroked a bases-clearing double to extend the lead to 7-1.

Edwardsville starter Daniel Lloyd just kept cruising along, striking out five in his four innings of work and only having to get out of a bases-loaded jam in the second. In the

fourth, EHS broke the game wide-open when Clayton singled and was chased home by a Jackson double. Garella then singled home a run with one out and Shakeel walked and Zimmer singled to load the bases.

Wallace was hit by a pitch to bring in a run and Krebs doubled in a pair of runs before Jordan Hovey unloaded a three-run shot over the fence in left to make it 15-1 in Edwardsville's favor. The Tigers managed to load the bases again, but couldn't score. Izaiah Hitt stroked a solo homer off Garella in the top of the fifth for a consolation run, but Garella retired the side to end the game.

Edwardsville went to 24-1 overall and 10-0 in the SWC, while East fell to 14-9 overall, 5-5 in the league. The Tigers go to Belleville West Thursday, then host their Tiger Classic round-robin tournament this weekend, taking on Lockport Central in their opener at 7 p.m. Friday.