

Edwardsville Outlasts Collinsville in Dramatic Softball Showdown

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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COLLINSVILLE - An RBI single by Riley Nelson, an RBI double by Sophie Antonini, and an RBI single by Grace Blakemore pushed across the three runs in the top of the eighth inning that Nelson made stand up as Edwardsville to an eight-inning 5-2 win over Collinsville in a Southwestern Conference softball game Thursday afternoon at the Collinsville Sports Complex.

The win was the first conference win for the Tigers, who are now 5-1 overall, winning their fifth straight game after losing the season opener to Freeburg. The Kahoks are now 1-7, having won their season opener over Father McGivney Catholic, but have now dropped seven in a row.

The starting pitchers, Graham Cobb-Gulledge for the Tigers, and Marissa Thomas for the Kahoks, both pitched well, keeping the game scoreless in the first three innings. Edwardsville broke out on top in the fourth when, with one out, Grace Oertle singled, and went to second on an error on the sacrifice bunt attempt by Antonini, allowing Oertle to score and Antonini to reach third to put Edwardsville up 1-0. The Tigers doubled the lead in the fifth, when, with two out, Brooke Burris drew a walk and scored on Jillian Lane's double over the center fielder's head to make it 2-0.

The Kahoks tied the game in the bottom of the seventh, when after getting the first two outs, Lexi Rafalowski reached on an infield single, and Katie Bardwell drew a walk to

put runners on first and second. Bailey Demick then tripled over the right fielder's head to score Rafalowski and Bardwell to tie the game 2-2, forcing extra innings.

Edwardsville took the lead back in the eighth when, with one out, Lane reached on an error by the first baseman and took third on the play. Nelson singled home Lane to put the Tigers back out in front 3-2.

Nelson then went to second on an Oertle sacrifice bunt, and scored when Antonini doubled down the left field line to extend the lead to 4-2. A Blakemore hit brought in Antonini with the Tigers' fifth run, with a fly out ending the inning. Nelson set down Collinsville in order to clinch the win for the Tigers.





Cobb-Gulledge went five innings in the circle for Edwardsville, only allowing a hit while striking out six, Antonini worked 1.2 innings. giving up two runs on three hits while fanning three, and Nelson went the final 1.1 innings, only allowing a hit while striking out two. Thomas went all the way in the circle for the Kahoks, allowing three runs, one earned, off six hits, striking out four.

The Kahoks next play at East St. Louis on Tuesday, hosts Alton next Thursday, and are at Breese Central on Apr. 5, with all games starting at 4:30 p.m., then play at Waterloo Apr. 6 at 11 a.m. The Tigers are at Civic Memorial in a Good Friday special start time of 10 a.m., then play at Alton on Tuesday, host Belleville West next Thursday, and are at Triad Apr. 5, all games starting at 4:30 p.m.

