

EHS seniors celebrate final regular season volleyball match with win over Belleville West

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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Anytime a person steps into an Edwardsville boys' volleyball match, there is a sense of excitement that surrounds the team. That was the case several-fold on Tuesday night at Lincoln Middle School as five senior players performed in their last home game.

Edwardsville celebrated Senior Night by downing Belleville West 25-16, 25-14 at Lucco-Jackson Gym Tuesday night in the regular-season finale for the Tigers.



The win put the Tigers' Southwestern Conference record at 10-0 and overall mark at 25-6.

Edwardsville coach Andrew Bersett said there is no doubt this year's group of seniors and the team is a special group.

"It was our 25th win and it has only happened once before in 2011," Bersett said. "This team has worked really hard and we have a good group of boys top to bottom."

Will Frank closed out his regular-season career with 10 kills and four blocks, while Ryan Bode had 10 digs; Jack Grimm had six blocks.

Edwardsville honored the five seniors - Ryan Bode, Joe Branmeier, Will Frank, Doug Jones and Jake Vandever and parents - before the match.

Bode, the team's libero, is one of the hardest workers on the entire team, Bersett said and is all over the court each match and every practice.

“He does such a good job defensively and makes all the other guys better on defense,” Bersett added.

Branmeier plays the outside for Edwardsville and has been a three-year starter.

“Last year, he was a partial libero and defensive specialist and this year we needed him outside,” the coach said. “He is an all-around good volleyball player. He is just a great athlete and a great guy on the team.”

Will Frank has been a catalyst for the Tigers, and uses his 6-7 frame effectively at the net to be a powerful player. He will continue play at McKendree College next season.

“Will is extremely gifted and it is great to see how he has grown over the last three years,” Bersett said. “He is also a really good defender, and passer. This year he might be our best passer. He will be pushed next year at McKendree College and become even better.”

Doug Jones has been an emotional leader for the team this season and worked extremely hard, Bersett said.

“He was a varsity player as a sophomore and has gotten better and better,” the coach said. “He is a great guy in the middle.”

Vandever, the setter, is the floor captain for the Tigers.

“The guys respect Jake out there and he puts our guys in good position,” he said. “The setter spot has a lot tough decisions and for the most part he has made the right decisions the last couple years and worked hard to become a good setter. He is going on scholarship to St. Louis University next season.”

Edwardsville enters the Granite City Regional as the top seed and starts action at 6 p.m. Tuesday against the Monday night Alton-Granite City winner.

The regional final is set for 6 p.m. Wednesday and East St. Louis and Metro-East Lutheran battle in the other semifinal game on Tuesday.

The Granite City champion plays the winner of the Belleville West Regional on May 29, then the winner advances to the sectional final on June 2 at Alton against the Lockport Sectional. The state tourney is at Hoffman Estates High School on June 5 and 6.









