

Hovey powers Edwardsville past Pekin 17-0 with huge game at plate

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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Jordan Hovey has been on a hot streak lately for Edwardsville.

The shortstop had a pair of home runs for the Tigers in Monday's regular season finale against Waterloo, and the senior did it again Wednesday in EHS' IHSA Class 4A Edwardsville Regional semifinal against Pekin, connecting twice – one of them a grand

slam – and driving in seven runs in the Tigers' 17-0, four-and-a-half inning destruction of Pekin at Tom Pile Field.

Add in being hit by a pitch his first time up, and Hovey recorded nine total bases for the day in just three times at bat. And Aaron Jackson, who bats third in the Tiger lineup, wasn't bad either – a 4-for-4 day that included back-to-back doubles in the first and four RBIs.

“Jordan deserves all the success he's gotten,” said Tiger coach Tim Funkhouser. “He's seeing the ball really well and he's worked hard; he's been swinging the bat well all season. It's great to see him be successful.”

“There were a couple of big hits there,” Hovey said. “We had a really good game, but we're going to keep working the next couple of days and get ready for our next game.”

Edwardsville got out of the gate pretty well – they scored 10 times in the bottom of the first, chasing Dragon starting pitcher Nate Hays after EHS had batted around with just one out. In total, the Tigers sent 16 men to the plate in the bottom of the first.

“They're a good team,” said Dragon coach Larry Davis. “That's one heck of a team there. I really think if a couple of things go their way, they could win it all.”

The 10-run explosion was highlighted by Hovey's grand slam that scored Bailey Zimmer Mitchell Krebs and Joe Wallace ahead of him and by Jackson's back-to-back doubles that were hit to the same part of the park in right-center. Jackson's first double scored Hovey, who led off the game being hit by a pitch, and ignited the explosion.

“I made an adjustment on the first at-bat and was able to stay inside and get the barrel up on the second double,” Jackson said. “Getting those 10 runs right away really helped ease the tension and let us settle in; it really lightened the mood in our dugout.”

Edwardsville used four pitchers in the game, taking starter Daniel Lloyd out after retiring the side in order in the first and using Chris Robinson for two innings, then putting in Tyler Hosto and Jackson in the fourth and fifth. The only jam any of them faced came in the Dragon third, when Robinson walked Ryan Palka and gave up a single to Shea Goesman to put runners at first and second with two out, but Robinson got Ryan Maas to fly to right to end the inning.



The Tiger third was their other big inning, highlighted by Hovey's second homer of the day that drove in three runs and a two-run shot from Jackson that brought in Collin Clayton. Edwardsville scored once each in the second and the fourth and Jackson retired the side in the fifth to end the game.

The 34-1 Tigers moved into Saturday's regional final against the winner of Thursday's Quincy-Alton game, which begins at 4:30 p.m. at Tom Pile Field.