



BIGGEST WIN OF SEASON: Edwardsville's girls volleyball team belts O'Fallon 25-20, 25-22

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O'FALLON – In the end, **Edwardsville** asserted itself on the court.

The Tiger volleyballers faced a big challenge in their Southwestern Conference match at O'Fallon's Panther Dome Tuesday night; the Panthers had visions of dethroning the Tigers from their spot as SWC champions.

And in both games, OTHS got off to big leads. But the Tigers shook off the leads and came from behind in both games to knock off the Panthers 25-20, 25-22.

“I'm so proud of the girls,” said **EHS coach Jami Parker**. “That was a lot of heart in the second game (where the Panthers jumped out to 11-3 lead early on); they worked hard, but to climb out of that against a really good team like O'Fallon is a lot of heart.”

Part of the reason the Tigers (now 14-5 overall, 4-0 SWC) fell behind was some errors, including mistakes on the rotation, that hurt EHS. “We started them in the second game,” Parker said. “We had a slightly different rotation; we backed it up a little bit trying to change some of the matchups. In the long run, the matchups worked; however, it threw the girls for a loop, but it worked out well.”

Losing the lead twice against the Tigers puzzled Panther coach Melissa Massey. “I'm at a loss for words,” Massey said. “I hadn't seen our girls play like that all season, so it's

disappointing. When girls are having an off-night, it's tough to get them out of that; a few of my big girls who normally are big for us just kind of did not play up to their potential this evening.

“On the other hand, just having one loss (the Panthers fell to 19-2 overall, 4-1 in the SWC) puts a lot of pressure on teams and you can see it as a good thing, take the pressure off. We've just got to bounce back from it; we've got no other choice.”

OTHS stormed out to a big lead in the opener, but the Tigers took advantage of some Panther errors to cut the lead and stayed close until they went ahead at 16-15. Then they went on a run that saw them run out winners in the opener. In Game 2, O'Fallon opened with a 6-1 lead and went on another run that got the lead to 11-3, with the Panthers seemingly in control.

Back came the Tigers, who went on a run to cut the lead to 11-7 before the Panthers scored again, then took advantage of some Panther miscues to cut the lead to 13-12. The teams traded points until a long spike by O'Fallon gave the Tigers their first lead at 15-14. Some big plays on the defensive end put EHS up 19-16 before a run tied things up at 19-19.

With the scores level at 20, the Tigers got off a run to make it 24-21 before the Panthers managed to stave off match point on a Elise Smith spike, but a net violation gave the Tigers their final point to run home winners.

Rachel Verdun led the Tigers with 20 assists on the night, with Rachel Pranger adding 10 digs and Megan Woll 15 digs; Annie Ellis had eight points on serve, with Corrine Timmerman adding six points and Kate Martin and Sydney Wright five each. Ellis and Timmerman each had five kills.

Next up for the Tigers is a Thursday evening home SWC match against Belleville East before a trip to the Chicago area for the Mizuno Tournament Friday and Saturday.

