

Edwardsville guns for its seventh win against Belleville West

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – Edwardsville took its record to 6-0 overall, 4-0 in the Southwestern Conference last week – and didn't have to suit up for it.

The ongoing teachers' strike in East St. Louis forced the cancellation of the Tigers' game against the Flyers, with EHS being awarded a forfeit victory; they'll return to the field at 7 p.m. Friday when they travel to Belleville West (3-3 overall, 3-1 SWC) in what promises to be a key league game.

“We kept our routine as normal as possible,” said **Tiger coach Matt Martin**. “About the only thing that didn't happen was a game Friday night; we had to prepare as if we were going to be playing.

“We've had a good week of practice and I didn't see any effect of missing a game this week. Right now, our focus is on Belleville West.”

The Maroons are coming off a tough 25-21 loss to crosstown rival Belleville East last week, and Martin realizes that West is going to provide a challenge to his team.

“We'll have to be ready for some of the things they do,” Martin said. “They have read-option offense, a really good running game and they're capable of getting some big plays. They're a really good team and when they beat East St. Louis (two weeks ago), East St. Louis lost the turnover battle. We've told the kids that and we'll definitely need to keep our mistakes to a minimum.”

Maroon quarterback Logan Betz has thrown for 1,003 yards so far this year on 73-of-139 passing; he'll have a big target in TeAntez Anthony, who has 27 catches for 458 yards and three touchdowns. Their running game features Kriston Davis (60 carries for 391 yards and two touchdowns) and Jarrell Anderson (41 carries for 211 yards and two touchdowns as well as 20 catches for 270 yards and a TD).

The defensive side of the ball features Ken Dixon (45 tackles on the year and two interceptions), Nicholas Foster (26 tackles, three sacks and a fumble recovery) and DeMario Nesbitt (46 tackles, three sacks) up front, with defensive back Jack Lanxon (28 tackles, two fumble recoveries, four interceptions) providing solid pass coverage.

The Tigers are led on defense by defensive ends A.J. Epenesa (22 tackles, three sacks, three fumble recoveries) and Desmond Chappell (19 tackles, three sacks), with Cyress Ahart providing leadership at linebacker (32 tackles, two sacks) and Jourdyn Jones (21 tackles, four interceptions) also playing well.

On offense, quarterback Riley Jones has had a solid season himself (31-of-52 passing for 539 yards, three touchdowns and three interceptions as well as 66 carries for 343 yards and four touchdowns), while Jackson Morrissey has carried the rushing load for EHS (71 carries for 443 yards and seven touchdowns). Nathan Kolesa (five catches for 83 yards and two touchdowns) and Chrys Colley (seven catches for 230 yards and three touchdowns) provide Jones some big targets.

Coming off the unexpected bye week can provide unexpected challenges, and that's where Martin believes senior leadership can help guide the Tigers. “You hope you have some good senior leadership when something like that happens,” Martin said. “I think

we've got some maturity on the team too; I always say you're just one bad Friday night away from losing the conference championship.

“We're going to have to play the best game we can to beat them.”

Following this week's clash, the Tigers close up the regular season with their Homecoming game against Alton Oct. 16 and travel to Granite City for the season finale Oct. 23.

[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)