

Quincy nips Edwardsville 1-0 in rainy boys soccer sectional match

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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COLLINSVILLE – Tuesday night's gloomy, rainy weather matched **Edwardsville's** mood at the end of their IHSA Class 3A Collinsville Sectional semifinal match against **Quincy** at Kahok Stadium.

A 49th-minute goal from Bradyn Nokes off a rebound was all the Blue Devils needed to send the Tigers home as Quincy scored a 1-0 win to advance to Friday's sectional final.

The loss eliminated EHS with a 12-7-4 mark, while QHS will take on Wednesday's semifinal winner between Moline and Normal Community Friday night; the Moline-Normal match will be played in Washington, Ill., at 7 p.m.

Tiger coach Mark Heiderscheid took a philosophical approach to the loss. “Most teams end up before the playoffs are done,” Heiderscheid said. “That's the reality of it, but I think, again, that's what makes high school athletics so important, so neat, so fun.

“At times like this, it's really a moment of grace, even though because it is devastating and hurts very bad, you have such an opportunity to have a moment of grace with your peers – in this case, it's my players – and I find that to be special. When you spend sometimes four, sometimes eight years when I'm working with kids I knew in middle school, together, it's a bond that I don't know if people can really relate to.”

Edwardsville's loss didn't come from a lack of effort, Heiderscheid felt. “We're in and around the box, it's a wet field – it's certainly not an excuse – but it's just one of those things where you've got the ball bouncing around but just not following a shot,” Heiderscheid said. “That's athletics; that's sports.

“How many times do you see that in football situations, how many times do you see that in basketball situations. And soccer is the pinnacle for all sorts of chaotic situations where it could be a goal, might be a goal, isn't a goal, and that's the way it goes.”

Blue Devil coach Matt Longo felt the match was, at least in the first half, a process of both sides feeling each other out. “The first half was two teams just feeling each other out,” Longo said, “trying to figure out where we can break. I think we had a great opportunity in the first half, and we ran a restart we hadn't ran before. I think our kids magically tried to do something, and I told them at halftime that we were going to score on a restart, and we did.

“It was a corner-kick play we run, but the most important thing was Bradyn Nokes following it up. We'll get the shot, but the other guys, do they do what they're supposed to, and that's exactly what we did. We got the rebound on a nice head ball.”

Nokes' goal came off that corner; the initial shot off the corner bounced straight down off the crossbar but did not cross the goal line. Nokes alertly headed the ball in off the rebound for the only goal of the match.

From there on, the Blue Devil defense took over, managing to smother several Tiger drives into the penalty area and breaking up several scoring opportunities. Tiger goalkeeper **Trey Riley**, who had made a great stop just prior to the Nokes goal, came up big a couple of other times as well but was forced to leave the match in the 75th minute after he suffered a cut near his eye in a collision with Tristin Lieberman.

Edwardsville had one final chance in the dying seconds of the match, but a long free kick was cleared away by the Blue Devils to end the Tigers' chances.

Quincy has now defeated Southwestern Conference teams Alton, Collinsville and Edwardsville so far this playoff season by a total score of 4-0, prompting Longo to remark that “they're all good teams; they're well-coached and we're right here with them” when the subject was brought up.

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