

Talented kicker Riley Patterson provides huge boost for Tigers

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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Some may not realize it, but kickers are the unsung heroes of football.

In games where a point or two decide the contest, a field goal or a pair of extra points can be the difference between winning or losing.

Edwardsville High School's Riley Patterson is arguably one of the best kickers in the entire region. He has also played soccer for much of his childhood and teen-age years.

Patterson, a junior, made a spectacular 54-yard field goal earlier in the year, rivaling **O' Fallon senior kicker Tanner McCann's** state record 60-yard field goal in October 2014. McCann, a senior, is committed to the University of Missouri.

Patterson converted 35-of-37 extra-point attempts and is 5-for-5 in field goal tries this season in eight games. Last week in Edwardsville's season-finale against Granite City he contributed seven extra points in seven attempts. He has contributed 50 points overall for Edwardsville this season and is averaging 6.3 points a game in his kicking position. Many of Patterson's kicks go into the end zone and can't be returned, which is uncommon in high school football. He is averaging 43.9 yards on punts so far this year. His kickoffs average an amazing 51.3 yards per kick, with a longest kickoff of 60 yards.

"He is a very good kicker and really improved his punting," Edwardsville head coach Matt Martin said. "A kicker really helps you in a field position battle. In high school football, PATs are not always automatic and I always tell the kids its great to be boring and make PATs automatic. For the most part we have been doing that. If you get within 50 yards of the goal, with Riley you know you have a good chance of scoring."

Patterson also plays soccer and somehow he juggles the two sports and his academic work.

"Riley has shown a lot of maturity doing both sports," Martin said.

As the playoffs start Saturday, Martin said he knows each game will be tough and he is glad he can look down the sidelines and turn to such a quality kicker/punter. And the best part is Patterson is only a junior and will be back next year.

