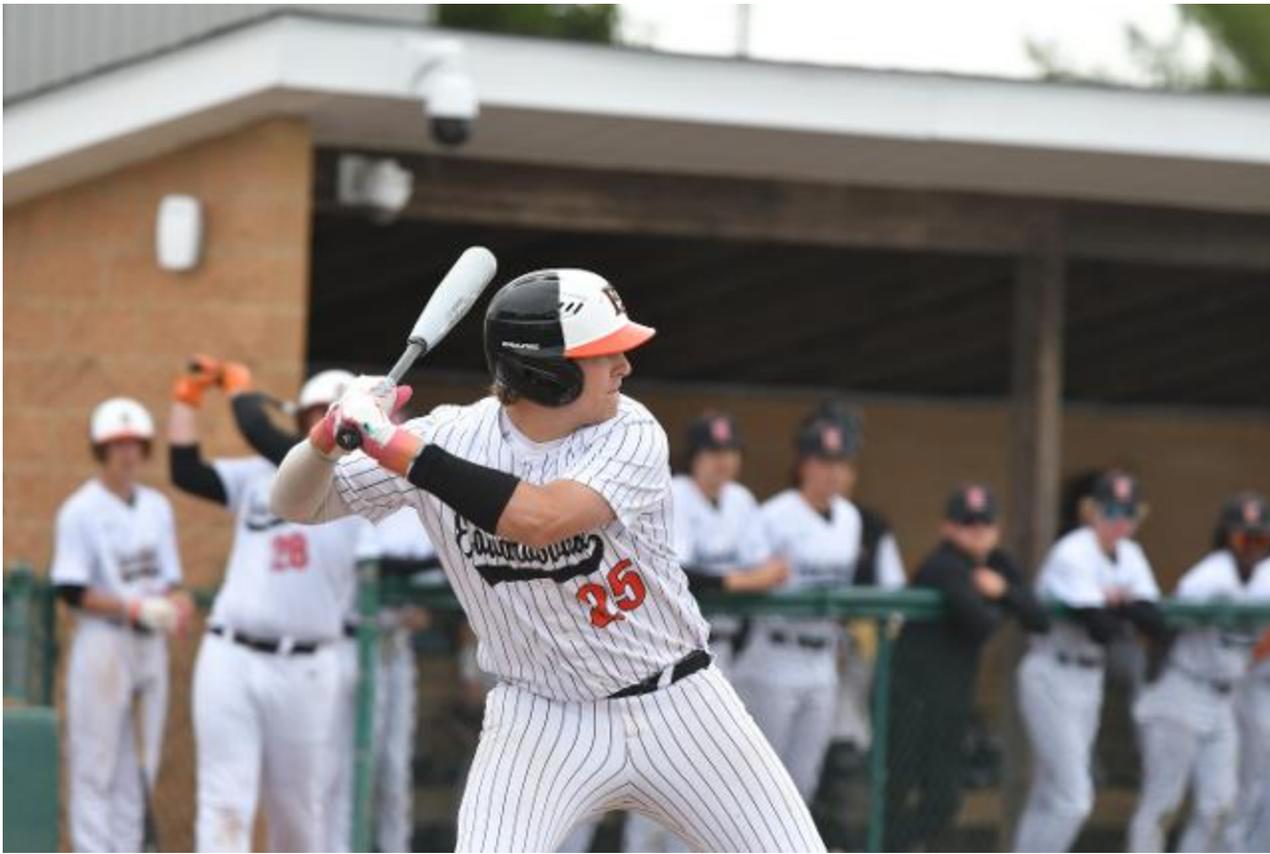


Chiarodo's Three-Run Homer Puts Tigers In Front, Five-Run Fifth Inning Helps Tigers Put Away 11-5 Win Over Kahoks

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - Joe Chiarodo hit a three-run homer in the fourth inning to put Edwardsville ahead for good, then a five-run fifth inning, highlighted by a Lucas Huebner bases-clearing double, helped give the Tigers an 11-5 win and a sweep of their two-game series with Collinsville late Friday afternoon at Tom Pile Field.

The game, originally set for Thursday, was pushed back 24 hours because of severe thunderstorms and tornado warnings that pushed through the St. Louis area late Thursday afternoon. The game itself wasn't the best defensively, as both sides committed nine errors, five by the Kahoks. The errors helped Edwardsville take advantage of situations to help them go on the win.

"It ended up being a good team win for us," said Tigers coach Tim Funkhouser. "We had a lot of guys contribute for us over the course of the game, and we had to face some adversity, some of it we kind of inflicted ourselves. But, also, we were able to overcome it. We know that some days, we're going to have guys pick up other guys, and ultimately, we have to play the whole game.

"And if Tony (Eberlin) wasn't as sharp on the mound, and he's been really good for us this year. With that being said, it was the third inning, and he still hadn't given up a hit. But we didn't make some plays around him, he had to make some extra pitches, and then just wasn't as sharp. He ended up walking some guys, but (Ethan) Stewart, whenever he

came in, Ethan was outstanding. He's been a really consistent performer for us this year, doesn't have any blockades, he just goes out about his business every day. So it was really fun to watch him come in, and just really pitch outstanding,"

Chiarodo managed to find the pitch he wanted by fouling off four straight balls before finding the one in his wheelhouse that he could hit out.

"Just a clutch swing," Funkhouser said. "Put a really good swing on it, hitting a ball off the wall to right center his first AB. Then to follow up with that clutch hit. We had just talked in the dugout; I think he had just struck out the at-bat before, and we just talked about how many times have we had a guy go up there, and foul off multiple pitches, and get a big hit for us, and sure enough, he fouled off about four pitches with two strikes, and was able to follow up with a big bang."

The five-run fifth that clinched the game was the Tigers being able to take advantage of the situation to get the clutch hits needed to extend their lead.

"I think we had multiple guys who just keep tacking on," Funkhouser said, "and getting good at-bats. Lucas Huebner has been really good for us, not only behind the plate, but swinging the bat in the four-hole for us has been big. He had those RBIs with the triple there, and he had a big hit over in Collinsville as well. So, I really like his tempo at the plate, I think it's getting better which gives him a chance to have a better margin of error, and also have the ability to hit the ball to all fields. He's just improving daily, which is something that's not surprising. the way he goes about his business, and such a mature, calm manner. He just goes out there and lays it on the line each day."

The game started with a Collinsville chance, as Kris Alcorn drew a lead-off walk, went to second when Adam Bovinett reached on an error by the third baseman, and Ethan Bagwell drew a walk to load the bases. but Darren Pennell hit into a double play to end the inning. The Tigers were able to take due advantage of the break in the home half of the first. Kolton Wright walked and stole second, eventually going to third when a pickoff throw got away. With one out, Lucas Krebs drew another walk, and Wright scored on a ground out by Huebner to third to give Edwardsville the lead at 1-0.

In the Kahok second, with one on and one out, Bryce Lemp hit a pop fly in the infield that dropped, the third baseman being charged with an error on the play, but still time to throw Lemp out at first. The throw got away for another error that allowed Keagan Coll to score and tie the game 1-1. A Blaine Martinez sacrifice fly on the next batter drove home Lemp to give Collinsville the lead at 2-1.

Edwardsville took the lead back in the third, all with one out. A RBI single by Greyson Rathgeb scored Wright, and a Max Waltenberger sacrifice fly to center scored Chiarodo

to give the Tigers a 3-2 lead. With one out in the top of the fourth, after a Carson Parrill single and a walk to Lemp, Martinez singled to load the bases, then Alcorn hit a sacrifice fly to center, scoring Parrill and sending Luke Robinson to third. Carter Harrington singled home Robinson to put Collinsville up 4-3, then an error by the center fielder on a Bovinett single allowed Martinez to score and make it 5-3.



In the home half, Mace Barnes and Wright both walked, and with one out and a 1-2 count against him, Chiarodo fouled off four straight pitches before connecting on a shot down the middle of the plate, clearing the right-center field fence for his game-changing home run that put the Tigers up 6-5. In the fifth, with two out, Wright reached on an error by the second baseman, which allowed pinch runner Evan Moore to score and make it 7-5. Hunter Baugh scored on a wild pitch with the bases loaded to make it 8-5, and after Lucas Krebs walked to reload the bases, Huebner unleashed a bases-clearing double down the right field line, scoring three runs to open up an 11-5 lead for Edwardsville.

Stewart proceeded to shut the Kahoks down after he came in with two out in the bottom of the fourth, throwing 3.1 shutout innings to earn the win and giving Edwardsville the 11-5 win.

The Kahoks are now 9-11, and next play a doubleheader against East St. Louis next Thursday at home, with the first game starting at 4:30 p.m. Collinsville then hosts Columbia Apr. 29, then travels to Alton on Apr. 30, with both games starting at 4:30 p.m.

The Tigers move to 11-5, and are in the midst of a seven-game winning streak. They will travel to Paducah, Ky., Saturday to face Memphis Christian Brothers Catholic, coached by former St. Louis Cardinals pitcher Jason Motte, at 1:30 p.m., then meet host McCracken County at 4 p.m.

Then, Edwardsville meets Alton in a two-game set, the first game at Redbirds Field on Tuesday, and the return game at Tom Pile Field Thursday, both games starting at 4:30 p.m.

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