

Tigers' Donovan Booker plays key role in playoff win over Minooka

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – Edwardsville found itself even with Minooka at 14-14 with about eight minutes left in the first half of their IHSA Class 8A football playoff quarterfinal game at Tiger Stadium Saturday evening.

The Tigers were in close when Kendall Abdur-Rahman dropped back to throw; he found Donovan Booker from 20 yards out as Booker went up for the pass and hauled it in, taking a big hit in the process.

Booker held on to the ball to give the Tigers the lead back at 21-14, a lead they wouldn't relinquish as EHS went on to eliminate the Indians 28-25 to advance to this weekend's Class 8A semifinals against Wilmette Loyola Academy; Edwardsville will host the game, with a spot in the Nov. 25 8A final at DeKalb's Huskie Stadium at stake against either Park Ridge Maine South or Frankfort Lincoln-Way East.

“I came off the line and saw Kendall roll out,” Booker said of the play. “I threw my hands up and no one was around; he threw the ball into space and threw it just enough to let me go get it.

“Kendall's a great quarterback; when he threw it, I knew it was mine – we'd been practicing all week. When I got hit, all I could think was to hold on to the ball and not let it go.”

The score helped send the Tigers to the Class 8A final four. “We haven't been in the final four since I was six,” Booker said. “This is a great team to be a part of. It was hard-mouth football; they just kept hitting and kept hitting. I knew they wouldn't let up.

“We had to find a way to win; I told the team a long time ago at some of the practices I wanted a state ring. We were going to keep fighting for it, and we're a young team – we have to fight. We have to fight every game. It's a great feeling to be in the final four.”