

Schorman fans 17, delivers two-run double as Explorers slip past Tigers 6-2 to remain unbeaten

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EDWARDSVILLE – Marquette Catholic's senior pitcher Meghan Schorman did almost all the things for the Explorers Friday afternoon at the Edwardsville Sports Complex.

Schorman struck out 17 batters and also delivered the game's key hit, a two-run double to left field as Marquette defeated the Tigers 6-2 to run their record to 17-0 on the season. The loss dropped Edwardsville to 7-3.

“Meghan's, like I said all year long, she's one of the best pitchers in the state,” said Marquette coach Dan Wiedman. “She was pumped up for this game. Edwardsville's got a tradition as being one of the powerhouses in the area, so I think anytime anybody in this area plays Edwardsville, they're pumped up to play that ball game. I know Meghan was today.”

The Explorers got off to a fast start, scoring twice in the first two innings before an Edwardsville rally cut the lead in half. Schorman's double occurred in the fifth to give Marquette their four-run lead back.

“It was huge getting up by four runs,” Wiedman said. “You know, four runs most of the time is Meghan, and our defense settles in after that. But Edwardsville started putting some pressure on us, we made a few mistakes and the game got a little bit close. Meghan came out and got the big hit, took us from 4-2 to 6-2, and that took a lot of pressure off us right then.”

Schorman's performance kept the Tiger batter off balance for much of the game.

“She is a very good pitcher,” said Edwardsville assistant coach Caty Ponce, running the team for head coach Lori Blade, who suffered a broken leg on Thursday. “And she made some good pitches today. We just didn't make adjustments at the plate. You strike out (17) times, you gotta make them feel something.

“I think first time through, we kind of looked on our heels,” Ponce continued, “and the second time through, we started looking at first pitch strikes, and we were successful with it. Then we went away from that later on, and we really seemed to struggle once she got ahead in the count.”

The Explorers jumped out on top in the opening frame. With one out, was hit by a Jordyn Henricks pitch, stole second, and went to third on a single by Grace Morris. After Tess Eberlin struck out and Morris stole second, Taylor Whitehead delivered a single that scored both runners. Grace Frost then singled, but Whitehead was thrown out at the plate on a very good throw by left fielder Ellie Viox to end the inning.

Marquette extended its lead to 4-0 in the second, thanks to RBI singles by K.B. Kirchner and Schorman, but the Tigers halved the lead in the third, all occurring with two out. Henricks singled, followed by a Lauren Taplin hit to right that was misplayed, allowing Henricks to score and Taplin to go to third. Anna Burke singled home Taplin, but Maria Smith was called out on strikes to end the inning.

“Once one person starts, we've done a good job of continuing that,” Ponce said of the string of hits that lead to the Tigers' runs. “It's just getting that first runner on and somebody making that adjustment.”

Marquette missed opportunities both the third and fourth innings, leaving the bases loaded in the fourth, thanks to good pitching by Henricks, getting the outs in key situations. In the fifth, with one out, Kyra Green drew a walk, and one out later, Kirchner singled. The Tigers brought on flex player Meghan Gorniak to pitch to Schorman, who laced a double over the left fielder's head to score Green and Kirchner and restore the Explorers' four-run lead.

“That's a tough one,” Ponce said. “Good hitter, they've got very good hitters, and she hit a tough pitch. So, wish we could have that one back, but we'll know better for next time.”

After conceding the double, Gorniak retired the final seven Explorer batters in a row, striking out one. Schorman continued her great performance over the final four innings, allowing only three runners to reach base, giving up one hit and a walk while striking out nine. Schorman fanned the side in the seventh to give Marquette the win.

The Explorers remain unbeaten, and not only are there still some good teams remaining on their schedule, there's also chances for younger players to learn things that will help them down the road.

“As a coach, it's probably heresy to say you don't like to be unbeaten,” Wiedman said with a laugh. “We're just out trying to play a lot of good teams. Edwardsville tonight, and we've got to go down tomorrow, we play Carbondale and Pinckneyville, so those are both two really good teams. So, just like I told the girls tonight, we won the ballgame, but there's definitely a couple of teaching moments out there. Some of our younger kids made mistakes, and sometimes, they don't ring a bell with the younger kids, unless they're in a big ball game like this. But I think the younger kids today saw some of the things they needed to start doing when they're playing against tough teams like this.”

The Explorers play both games this afternoon at Pinckneyville, then play at East Alton-Wood River Monday afternoon before hosting Nokomis next Thursday. The Tigers have a conference game against East St. Louis Saturday morning before going to Hardin Calhoun Monday afternoon and hosting Collinsville Tuesday before playing at Columbia on Wednesday. The Tigers will take each game one at a time.

“We've got two games tomorrow,” Ponce said, “so we just go day-by-day and we'll see how it works out from there.”





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