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Hayden Moore Home Run Lifts Tigers to SWC Baseball Title, He Looks Ahead to Postseason

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – Edwardsville sophomore baseball center fielder Hayden Moore hit the first pitch of the bottom of the seventh inning over the fence in near right field to give the Tigers a dramatic 7-6 win over O’Fallon Tuesday afternoon at Tom Pile Field.

The home run clinched the outright Southwestern Conference championship for the Tigers, now 27-4 overall, and give Edwardsville plenty of momentum going into the postseason, which starts next week.

“It felt great, and I’m just glad our team came out on top,” Moore said in an interview following the game.

Moore described the pitch he hit as a low fastball that was right in his wheelhouse.

“It was just a low fastball that I turned on it,” Moore said, “and I got a barrel on it, and watched it go.”

It was a very hard-fought, up-and-down kind of a game where both teams kept battling, which is the norm whenever the Tigers and Panthers get together.

“Yeah, it was an emotional game,” Moore said. “Both teams came out here ready to play. Every time we play O’Fallon, its a game. And we came out here ready, and they were ready, but we came out on top, and just worked harder.”

Moore agreed that the win and the conference title give his team a shot of confidence as the postseason approaches.

“It’s a lot of confidence going into the playoffs,” Moore said. “We came out with our regionals next week, and we’ll be ready.”

There still a few regular season games remaining for Edwardsville, and Moore knows there still more things to accomplish.

“Just keep our confidence high,” Moore said, “and putting the ball in play, and just get out on top and be ready for the playoffs.”

As far as emotions following a big win such as Tuesday, Moore and his teammates were very happy, but also didn’t know how to express those emotions.

“That’s just big,” Moore said. “We’re all so happy right now, we just can’t wait. We don’t have emotions right now, we’re just too shocked,” Moore also said with a laugh and a smile.

There’s still plenty to look ahead to in the postseason, and Moore knows that the Tigers will be ready to go for the IHSA Class 4A tournament series.

“Just come out, we come out ready,” Moore said, “and we show them what we can do, and if we show what we can do, and we’re ready, we can go far.”

And there’s also the possibility the Tigers and Panthers could face off down the road. Moore is looking forward to that possibility.

“Oh, yeah, they’ll be ready back for us,” Moore said, “and we’ll be ready even more. It’ll be a good game to end the season.”