

22 In A Row: Huebner Drives In Four Runs, Stearns, Roberson Drive In Two Each, As Tigers Defeat Spartans 9-0

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - Catcher Grant Huebner had four RBIs, while Spencer Stearns and Jacoby Roberson had drove in two runs each and Jake Holder led a trio of pitchers in holding DeSmet Jesuit of Creve Coeur, Mo. to four hits as Edwardsville defeated the Spartans 9-0 in a baseball game Monday afternoon at Tom Pile Field.

It was the Tigers' 22nd consecutive win to start the season and Holder delivered five quality innings, allowing DeSmet only two hits while on the mound, walking one and striking out another.

"I'm feeling good," said Edwardsville head coach Tim Funkhouser. "I was really impressed with Jake Holder today. I thought he did a great job on the mound. He's been a guy that a great quality pitcher for us, but man, he did a great job of doing what he does, letting his ball move and letting them creating a lot of mishit balls and then our defense letting them play, so it was really fun to watch."

The game was played in less than ideal conditions, where a light rain fell throughout, along with being overcast and a bit chilly, with a breeze blowing toward left field. The Edwardsville players did a great job of fighting off the conditions and concentrating at the task at hand.

"Yeah, really the first day where we've had a little bit of weather and it never really came in strong," Funkhouser said, "but spilled just a little slick clod of grass and everything like that. And I thought our guys did a great job of handling the limited conditions that there were and our guys do a great job of playing each pitch and that's why we've been in the position we've been in."

The Tigers scored twice in each of the opening two innings, then hit the Spartans for four more in the third, taking an 8-0 lead over a good, quality team.

"DeSmet's in a great conference (the Metro Catholic Conference, with St. Louis U. High, CBC, St. John Vianney and Chaminade College Prep)," Funkhouser said, "and they play great competition, so to jump out early was key in that game and for Jake to just keep silencing their bats was huge."

The Tigers jumped out to an early 2-0 lead in the first when, with one out, Huebner singled, went to second on a wild pitch, and scored on a Stearns double to give Edwardsville a 1-0 lead. A RBI single by Caleb Copeland brought home Stearns to double the lead at 2-0. In the second, Cade Hardy opened with a single, went to second on a grounder back to the box and Kayden Jennings drew a walk. Hardy and Jennings then executed a double steal and one out later, Huebner singled both runners home to make it 4-0.

Copeland drew a walk to start the Tiger third, then went to second when Hardy was hit by a pitch with one out. Both advanced on a passed ball and were singled home by Roberson to make it 6-0. Roberson then stole second and went to third when the catcher's throw went into center field for an error, then Jennings was hit by another pitch and stole second. Both Roberson and Jennings scored on Huebner's second two-run single in as many innings to make the score 8-0. The final run was scored in the fifth, when after the bases were walked full, Stearns lifted a sacrifice fly to left, scoring Jennings to make it 9-0 for the Tigers.

Meanwhile on the mound, Holder was masterful, allowing only back-to-back singles in the second to Darian Crisp and Luke Burns, retiring nine in a row at one point before walking Michael Wunderlich in the fifth, who was picked off by Huebner with a brilliant throw. Andrew Hendrickson pitched out of a bases loaded jam in the sixth and Zack Schmidt pitched a perfect seventh inning to preserve the 9-0 Tiger win.

DeSmet is now 11-11 on the year, while the Tigers go to 22-0 and are set to face a very good Belleville East team in a series set to start tomorrow at East, with a rematch at home Thursday, both games set to start at 4:30 p.m., then the Tigers meet up with Teutopolis Friday afternoon at home in a 7 p.m. start. Funkhouser is looking forward to meeting up with the Lancers.

"We haven't had a chance to see them in person yet," Funkhouser said, "but they've done great things, just looking on their scores. It looks like they have a lot of good pitching and they've played good defense and their hitters are doing well. So it'll be a good day to see what we're made of and also to see where we're at in the conference and seed meetings and all that other stuff."

And the Tigers got the month of May off to a great start as well.

"No," Funkhouser said. "Our guys make it very easy, they practice hard and they love playing together as a team and we've had a great amount of success, so there's a lot of recipes for success as a team there and they're fun to be a part of."



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