

Hamilton Strikes Out Eight In Circle, Goes Three-For-Three At Plate With Lead-Off Homer, Three RBIs, Tigers Win Over Lancers

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - It was a big day for senior pitcher Avery Hamilton as she hit a lead-off homer over the fence in left-center, then drove in two more runs in going three-for-three at the plate and also pitched well, striking out eight as Edwardsville defeated Belleville East 3-1 in a Southwestern Conference softball game played Tuesday afternoon at the Edwardsville Sports Complex.

The lead-off shot was Hamilton's third homer of the season and now also has 11 RBIs on the season while improving her pitching record to 6-1 as she scattered five hits and allowed an unearned run in a masterful performance inside the circle.





"I thought Avery did a great job," said Edwardsville head coach Caty Happe. "getting out early, pitching, getting three outs and obviously, starting us off with the home run. But great job for us early, getting on the pitcher and scoring some runs. And then, our defense and Avery really held in there."

It was Hamilton's day on both sides and Happe was very impressed with her performance.

"Awesome for a senior to lead us in this type of game," Happe said, "who's been in this game over and over again. And those younger kids are going to follow."

The most important thing on the day was the Tigers improved to 9-1 on the season and are continuing to keep rolling along and playing very well.

"Yep," Happe said. "Keep getting better and we've got a good rest of the week."

Happe is also very pleased with how the team is playing and competing so far.

"The kids are really competing and this was a good test for us today," the coach said.

The Lancers have played very well also this season, and had opportunities. The Tigers were able to turn East away at every turn.

"Yeah, we made some good plays defensively," Happe said, "and then, we gave them opportunities and we were able to close the door."

Hamilton set down the first seven batters in a row before Ashlynn Samson reached on a single with one out in the top of the third, taking second on a passed ball and going to third on a ground out by Ary Kohler. Hamilton then got Serenity Childress to fly out to center to end the threat.

Meanwhile, Hamilton led off the game for the Tigers with her lead-off homer on a one-two pitch over the left-center field fence to give the Tigers a 1-0 lead. In the second, with two away, Reese McNamara singled and Maddie Kolakowski doubled to put runners in scoring position, with Hamilton bringing in both runs on a single to right to give Edwardsville a 3-0 lead. Hamilton then took second on a wild pitch, but a grounder back to the box ended the inning.

The Lancers were able to break through in the top of the fourth, starting with a one-out single by Maya Hataway, who took second on a ground out and scored when a pop fly hit by Janessa Sydow was dropped for an error, allowing Hataway to score. A ground out ended the inning with Edwardsville still on top 3-1.

The Tigers had a chance to pad their lead in the sixth, starting when Riley Nelson doubled to right and was sacrificed to third by Shelby Gorniak. But a foul out and ground out ended the inning. East had a two-out chance in the seventh on back-to-back singles by Emma Loyet and Samson, but Hamilton struck out Kohler looking to end the game in favor of the Tigers 3-1.

To go along with Hamilton's three hits and three RBIs, Jillian Lane had a pair of hits, while Nelson, McNamara and Kolakowski all had a hit apiece. Samson had three hits to lead the Lancers, while Hataway and Loyet had the only other hits.

Hamilton and East's Olivia Hemmerle threw complete games in the circle, Hamilton allowing five hits while allowing no walks and striking out eight. Hemmerle allowed three runs on seven hits, walking one and fanning four.

The Lancers are now 11-3-1, while Edwardsville goes to 9-1 and plays on the road for the next four games, playing at East St. Louis on Thursday at 4:30 p.m., then plays a

doubleheader at Chatham Glenwood Friday, with the first game starting at 4:30 p.m., then goes to O'Fallon on Apr. 18 and returns home to face Hardin Calhoun Apr. 19, with both games starting at 4:30 p.m.





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