

Edwardsville Plays Well, But Late 11-0 Run by Webster Groves Helps Give Statesmen 51-45 Win In Tigers NCAA Live Showcase Event

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - The Edwardsville High boys basketball team played well in their first game of the day against Webster Groves in the Edwardsville NCAA Live Showcase event on Saturday morning, but a late 11-0 run by the Statesmen helped give Webster a 51-45 win in the first of two games for the Tigers on the day at Lucco-Jackson Gym.

In the showcase's first game on Friday, the Tigers met Ladue Horton Watkins, then played St. John Vianney Catholic later in the afternoon. After the game against the Statesmen on Saturday morning, Edwardsville played against Cardinal Ritter College Prep Catholic in the afternoon, four high-quality opponents in a showcase designed to show the talents of players to college recruiters and coaches.

"We had a chance to win that one," said Edwardsville head coach Dustin Battas, "We were up three and they went on a little 8-0 run on us. We got a couple of costly mistakes on defense, but they're good and we're short a few guys and Kris (Crosby) is out hurt, so we're a little bit thin. But it's a good experience for our younger guys especially. I thought Malik (Allen) and A.J. (Tillman) showed good leadership, so overall, those are hard games. But that's why playing in those games, to get better and get some

experience. And I feel good about the effort our guys played with and it was good to see us have a chance to win it."



Despite the absence of Crosby, Allen and Tillman did play very well throughout the game, with Allen sinking key shots at opportune times. Even with the stiff competition, Battas felt his team played well in its first three games.

"We've had two close ones," Battas said, "and then, we had a really hard one against Vianney. But I put us in the top competition that I could because our guys wanted that and they wanted to play good teams to play in front of college coaches. So overall, it's been a great experience. We'd like to win more games, but I think at the same time, you're also aware of the big picture and the goal is to be playing your best in November. So we're good. It's been a great experience so far and we've got another real hard one later with Cardinal Ritter, who I think won a Missouri state championship last year (in Class 5)/ But that's what our guys wanted, so we're happy to be in our event and things are going well."

Edwardsville went ahead in the opening six minutes of the game 9-6, but later in the first half, Webster went on an 8-0 run to take a 14-9 lead. The Tigers countered with a 7-0 run to take back the lead at 16-14 and for the rest of the first half, and after that, the lead seesawed between the two before the Tigers took a 23-22 lead at halftime.

Early in the second half, the lead continued to seesaw between the two sides, with the Tigers eventually taking a 34-33 lead with 11:48 left. Webster fought back to take the lead 40-36 before a key three brought the Tigers back to 40-39, The Statesmen then went on an 11-0 run to take a 51-39 lead late. A pair of threes brought the Tigers back to 51-45, but Edwardsville would get no closer as the Statesmen went on to their win.

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