

Traditional soccer powers battle, Tigers emerge with 2-1 victory in opener

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – One very traditional Metro East soccer school took on another traditional power at Edwardsville's Tiger Stadium Thursday night.

The very traditional school was Granite City, who has a legacy of Illinois state championships. The other school was Edwardsville, who has won a pair of state titles themselves.

End result: The Tigers, on the strength of a pair of second-half goals, defeated the Warriors 2-1 in EHS' season-opener and the Southwestern Conference opener for both sides.

The match was a tight one throughout, the Warriors taking the lead only in the fifth minute of first-half stoppage time before the Tigers scored in the 43rd and 58th minutes for the win.

“The initial possessions were good, but their work rate was exceptional,” said Tiger coach Mark Heiderschied. “We were stymied at that point; we had some chances, but they weren't clear chances. They finally took advantage of a chance and put one away.

“We took a few more chances early in the second half and once we tied it up, you could tell there was a momentum shift, and that was a big thing.”

“We fought, we battled and kept coming,” said Warrior coach Kenny Jackson. “They showed a lot of character and heart. We were defending well and working hard.”

Both teams did have a couple of good chances as the first half wore on, but none came to fruition. The Warriors finally broke through very late in the first half, however, when the Warrior midfield floated a feed to Nathan Tanthavong, who knocked it home past Tiger goalkeeper Trey Riley in the fifth minute of first-half stoppage time to give Granite a 1-0 lead at the half.

It didn't take that long for the Tigers to respond; it came in the 43rd minute when one of the Tigers was brought down in the penalty area and EHS was awarded a penalty kick. Bayne Noll stepped up and got it past Warrior goalkeeper Ryan Houston to draw the match level at 1-1.

Not long after that, Warrior defender Latrell Smith was given a red card and sent off for dangerous conduct when he came in on a challenge high. It forced Granite City to play the rest of the match down a man and proved to be a factor later on when, in the 58th minute, Blake Broshaw – who's dad, Brent, played on Granite City's 1990 IHSA state championship team under coach Gene Baker – took a cross and managed to slip the ball past Houston to put EHS ahead for the first time.

“That was a great shot,” Heiderschied said. “Mohammad (Hamad) set Blake up really well and that was great for Blake to get the goal. It meant a lot for us.”

Granite City attempted to keep coming at Riley for an equalizer but couldn't as the Edwardsville defense kept the Warriors at bay and allowed the Tigers to come out with the win.

Edwardsville will take part in this weekend's Alton Round-Robin Invitational, meeting up with Dunlap at 5:30 p.m. today at Gordon Moore Park, then meet up with Triad at 9:30 a.m. Saturday and Alton at 7:30 p.m. Saturday. Granite City meets Rochester at Gene Baker Field in Granite City Saturday morning.

