

Grimm is no fairy tale for Eagles

Written by Jim Ecker

Tuesday, 29 March 2016 20:41 -



Bryce Grimm has gone from being a part-time starter for the Kirkwood baseball team at the beginning of his freshman year in 2015 to one of the stars of the team this season as a sophomore.

Next year, the Xavier High School grad could be patrolling center field for an NCAA Division I ballclub at a four-year school.

Grimm continued to build on his solid campaign Tuesday as the Eagles split a non-conference doubleheader against Black Hawk College, winning the first game 11-9 and dropping the nightcap 10-2.

Grimm went 3-for-5 in the twin-bill with a home run, two walks and four runs, raising his batting average to .425 with two homers and 19 RBIs. He leads Kirkwood in hits, runs scored and batting average and ranks second in RBIs.

"Bryce Grimm has come so far," Kirkwood Coach Todd Rima said. "He wasn't playing every day (at the beginning of last year), but all he did was work. Now he's hitting with more power and driving in runs.

"He's as good a center-fielder as anybody in our league and in the midwest, I think. He's a Division I baseball player. There's no question in our mind that he can play at that level. We're going to find him a spot, because he's a great player.

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"And he's a better kid than he is a player," said Rima, "and that's what makes him pretty special."

Grimm said he's received a few nibbles from D-I schools, but that's it so far.

"Nothing too serious right now," he remarked. "I'm not too worried about that. I just want to keep having fun out here with the guys. The time will come and the decision will be made."

The Eagles have been having a lot of fun lately. They began the season with four straight losses at Johnson County, but they've won 18 of their last 22 games and finished Tuesday's doubleheader at 18-8 overall and 4-0 in their league.



The Eagles were riding a nine-game winning streak before losing the nightcap to Black Hawk (4-6).

Grimm hit in the leadoff spot for Kirkwood after he got into the lineup on a daily basis last season. Now he's batting third for the Eagles and producing runs on a regular basis.

"I give a lot of credit to the coaches with all their work," he said. "They've helped not only me, but everyone else on this team develop. The majority of the credit goes to them. I'm just following the plan they give me."

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"I'm happy," he said, "but at the end of the day the only thing that really matters is how the team does. We're playing all-right baseball now. At the end of the day that's more important than my stats."

The Eagles have played winning baseball the last few weeks, but Rima is the first to acknowledge they have not played great baseball so far.

"We haven't played our best baseball yet. I think that's what excites us," he said. "We're finding ways to win, but we haven't put all three phases together yet. And I think when we do this could be a special group.

"We're going to get there, and we're going to get there hopefully at the right time."

Kirkwood trailed 9-7 heading into the bottom of the sixth inning of the opener, but the Eagles pushed across four runs to claim the victory. Jack Fitzgerald snapped a 9-9 tie with an RBI double, driving in Matt Paciello, then Colin Kreiter plated Brandon Brittain with an insurance run with a sacrifice fly.

Grimm went 2-for-3 in the opener with a solo home run. Paciello and Brittain had two hits.

Fitzgerald went 2-for-3 with a double and home run for Kirkwood in the second game.

The Eagles are scheduled to play conference doubleheaders at Southwestern this Saturday and Sunday.

GAME 1

Black Hawk □ □ **300 303 0 - 9 7 3**

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Kirkwood ☐ ☐ ☐ **103 304 x - 11 10 2**

W - Morrissey. L - Roberts. S - Checo.

GAME 2

Black Hawk ☐ ☐ **200 300 5 - 10 9 1**

Kirkwood ☐ ☐ ☐ **001 100 0 - 2 4 2**

W - Johnson. L - Yanecek.