

Kirkwood softball places 5th at nationals

Written by Metro Sports Report

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CLINTON, Miss. - The Kirkwood Eagles lost both of their games at the NJCAA D2 national softball tournament Friday and tied for fifth place.

Kirkwood lost to Jones County, 7-6, in the winner's bracket semifinals, then lost to Phoenix, 5-2, in a loser's bracket game and was eliminated from the tournament.

The Eagles finished the season with a 58-6 record.

Kirkwood, which was seeded No. 2 in the tournament, went 2-2 in the tournament in Mississippi. Jones County, which is seeded No. 3, advanced to the winner's bracket finals against LSU Eunice. Phoenix, which is seeded No. 1, stayed alive in the loser's bracket.

Kirkwood trailed Jones County, 7-2, heading into the bottom of the seventh inning in the winner's bracket semifinals. The Eagles loaded the bases and pulled within 7-3 on a sacrifice fly by Taylor Nearad. Lexi Ferrari struck out, but Maddie Hansen belted a three-run homer to pull the Eagles within 7-6 with two outs.

The game ended when Gabi Carter struck out looking.

Nearad hit her 30th home run of the season against Jones County, a two-run shot in the fifth inning. Lexi Kinnaird (25-3) pitched six innings and took the loss, snapping a 34-game winning streak for the Eagles.

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Kirkwood grabbed a quick 2-0 lead in the bottom of the first inning against Phoenix, but the Eagles never scored again and collected only four hits in the ballgame. Nicky Simpson (27-3) took the loss.