

Mayhew creates mayhem for Eagles

Written by Jim Ecker

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DoniRae Mayhew figured she'd spend most of her time as a corner infielder for the Kirkwood Eagles this season, but she's turned into a star pitcher who's also spent time at shortstop.

No matter where she plays, Mayhew continues to cause major problems for Kirkwood's opponents.

Mayhew tossed a one-hitter and went 3-for-3 Thursday afternoon as the third-ranked Eagles dumped No. 20 Madison College, 8-0, in the first game of a doubleheader at Kirkwood.

Mayhew then slugged a home run in the second game to help the Eagles sweep the twinbill, 8-1, raising their record to 22-2.

Mayhew, a sophomore from Bettendorf, is now 10-0 with a 1.77 ERA for the Eagles as their co-No. 1 pitcher with Natalie Halvorson. She's also hitting .406 with eight home runs.

Mayhew did not expect to pitch so much this season, but she's moved to the forefront after several other hurlers left the team.

"When the school year started we had, I think, five pitchers," she said. "Our pitching depth is a little short now, but I think we can still get it done with what we have."

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Mayhew went 5-0 with a 2.19 ERA as Kirkwood's third pitcher last season, but never imagined she'd be operating at such a high level after pitching mostly in relief in 2017.

"I've surprised myself, honestly," she said. "Last year I didn't pitch a lot, but I've been working on it a lot knowing that we only have two pitchers. It's been pretty good so far."



Miranda Kaste, primarily an infielder, and Hannah Mausser, a catcher, have tossed a few innings for Kirkwood recently, but Mayhew and Halvorson have carried the load.

Mayhew has signed to play for the Iowa Hawkeyes next season, but does not expect to pitch in Iowa City. She hit .440 with 18 homers and 83 RBIs at Kirkwood last season and is a major threat in the batter's box.

"They said I would be a corner player and I'd be a 9-1-1 emergency pitcher if they had a bunch of injuries, but I don't plan on doing that," she said about Iowa.

Mayhew was pressed into action at shortstop in the opening weeks of the season due to injuries, but she's returned to being a corner infielder or designated hitter when she's not pitching.

Kirkwood Coach Joe Yegge, knowing Mayhew is a superior athlete, approached her about playing shortstop before the season began.

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"At first I was like, 'Wait, are you serious?,'" she remarked, smiling. "But I played it in high school up to my junior year and I've played it since I was younger, so it was neat to get back into it because I hadn't done it for awhile."

Rachel Stewart, a freshman from Davenport West, has become the every-day shortstop the past few weeks and has been doing very well for the Eagles. Stewart hit a two-run homer in the bottom of the fifth inning in the first game for an 8-0 walk-off victory.

It was Stewart's ninth homer of the season and she's hitting well over .500 in the lead-off spot in the batting order.

Lauren Kuch, a freshman from Cedar Rapids Prairie, went 3-for-3 in Game 1. Skylar Ryan, a freshman from Iowa City West, ripped a three-run triple in the bottom of the fifth inning when the Eagles scored six runs to end the game by the mercy rule.

Halvorson (10-2) pitched a complete game in the nightcap with 11 strikeouts. Mayhew, Kuch and Monika Bevans hit consecutive home runs when the Eagles erupted for eight runs in the third inning.

Kenady Waugh went 3-for-4 with a double in the second game. Kuch and Audra Bridenstine had two hits. Mayhew drove in two runs.

Kirkwood, which reached the World Series and finished 55-6 last year, has another strong club in 2018.

"I like the way our team has shaped up this year," said Mayhew. "The group of girls that we have is a really good bunch. I love them all."

"I think the way we get along off the field really helps us on the field. We trust each other and we work together well, and I think it's mostly because of our relationship off the field."

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Madison College fell to 16-5 with the two losses.

Kirkwood was scheduled to host Illinois Central in a doubleheader Saturday, but those games have been postponed.