

No-no state softball tournament for J-Hawks

Written by Jake Koolbeck

Thursday, 14 July 2011 22:11 - Last Updated Thursday, 14 July 2011 22:15

MARSHALLTOWN - Pain, tears, and disappointment filled the eyes of the Jefferson softball players Thursday night after the J-Hawks came up short in their Class 4A regional final game against Dowling Catholic.

The J-Hawks lost 2-0 in eight innings, making it two years straight that Jefferson (32-8) came up short of a state tournament appearance.

"We had a great year, the girls really overachieved," Jefferson Coach Larry Niemeyer said. "It is too bad it had to end this way."

Jefferson ace Hannah Petersen and Dowling ace Demi Plathe came ready for a battle. Petersen, who has been stellar all year, was again a force to be reckoned with, allowing just six hits in eight innings.

Plathe was better. Despite pitching 16 innings the night before in a 3-2 semifinal win over Marshalltown, Plathe stifled J-Hawk hitters en route to a no-hit shutout.

"I knew it would be a tough game," Niemeyer said. "I have seen her four or five times. She is tough."

For seven innings it looked as if no one would ever score as both teams struggled to get runners on base.

Defense came up big for both teams throughout the game as each team made big plays to leave runners stranded and end scoring threats.

Jefferson looked like it would strike in the first inning after junior Kailey Drake walked and was bunted over to set Kenna Fry up with a chance to give Jefferson a lead. Fry delivered with a

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well hit ball to right center but Dowling right fielder Mackenzie Clair made a diving catch to save a run.

The J-Hawk defense did its job in the third, turning a double play on a bunt that was popped up to get out of the inning after a one out single from Dowling shortstop Laurie Siedl. Petersen got out of the next three innings with big strikeouts to leave Dowling runners stranded. She struck out six.

The J-Hawks hit the ball hard but did not threaten again until the sixth inning when pinch hitter Hannah McInerney reached second on an error with one out. Dowling again escaped danger when pinch runner Katie Naber was thrown out at third after tagging on a long fly ball.

"I thought we hit pretty well tonight, it was just right at people," Niemeyer said.

Dowling broke through in the eighth inning with three hits, including a two-run home run that just barely cleared the right-field fence by the No.9 batter in the order, Alicia Crivaro.

The J-Hawks went down in order in the bottom of the eighth.

The J-Hawks return nine starters next year including ace Hannah Petersen and leading hitter Rachel Sedlacek.

Dowling (23-17) advances to next week's state tournament at Fort Dodge.

DOWLING CATHOLIC (2)

Claudia Farrell, CF, 4 0 0 0, Katie Mauk, 3B, 3 0 1 0, Demi Plathe, P, 4 0 1 0, Madison Gale, cr, 0 0 0 0, Mickie Ryan, 1B, 3 0 0 0, Emily Aller, C, 3 0 0 0, Mackenzie Clair, RF, 2 0 0 0, Jessica Bastian, DP, 2 0 0 0, Laurie Siedl, SS, 3 1 2 0, Alicia Crivaro, 2B, 3 1 2 2, Kelsay Hannam, LF, 0 0 0 0. Totals 27 2 6 2.

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JEFFERSON (0)

Rachel Sedlacek, LF, 3 0 0 0, Kailey Drake, CF, 2 0 0 0, Hannah Petersen, P, 2 0 0 0, Kenna Fry, 1B, 3 0 0 0, Maddie Hanson, DP, 3 0 0 0, Carson Burgart, SS, 3 0 0 0, Amber Grimm, RF, 3 0 0 0, Kaitlyn Davidson, 2B, 2 0 0 0, Maddy Blietz, 3B, 1 0 0 0, Hannah McInerney, ph, 1 0 0 0, Katie Naber, pr, 0 0 0 0, Nicole Marquart, C, 0 0 0 0. Totals 23 0 0 0.

Dowling 000 000 02 - 2 6 1

Jefferson 000 000 00 - 0 0 0

Plathe and Aller. Petersen and Marquart. W – Plathe. L – Petersen. HR – Crivaro.