

Kramer's dramatic slam saves No. 4 Eagles

Written by Jim Ecker

Saturday, 07 April 2018 21:08 -



Ross Kramer will remember what happened on Saturday for the rest of his life. And he'll be smiling about it.

His special day began about 9 a.m. when Purdue baseball coach Mark Wasikowski called to see if Kramer wanted to play for the Boilermakers in the Big Ten next year.

The answer was a resounding yes, thank-you very much.

Kramer's day ended when he belted a grand slam in the bottom of the ninth to give Kirkwood a walk-off 9-7 victory over Iowa Lakes in the second game of their ICCAC doubleheader at Kirkwood.

The fourth-ranked Eagles scored 13 runs in the first inning of the first game and cruised to a 17-0 victory in five innings.

Kramer hit .363 with five homers for Kirkwood last season, but his batting average was languishing at the .200 level when he stepped to the plate in the bottom of the ninth with the Eagles trailing 7-5 and the bases loaded with one out.

It was a fastball and Kramer walloped it over the wall in right-center field.

"I think he left it a little up," said Kramer. "I don't even know. I blacked out a little bit."

Kramer was not kidding about his faulty memory.

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"I remember swinging. And that's it," he said. "I remember celebrating at home. Honestly I blacked out the whole time around the bases."

Kramer, an outfielder and relief pitcher from Urbandale, tried to commit to Purdue on Friday, but the Boilermakers upset eighth-ranked Indiana and time slipped away.

He was delighted when Wasikowski called Saturday morning and just as delighted to finish the sweep against Iowa Lakes with the biggest blast of his career.

"Yeah, this is a good way to end it," he remarked.

Kramer had not accomplished a whole lot in the doubleheader prior to his game-winning heroics. He had a rough time in right field in the top of the ninth inning when he lost a pair of fly balls in the bright sun, helping Iowa Lakes score three runs for a 7-4 lead.

"He hasn't had the year that he wanted to have, but we believe in him," said Kirkwood Coach Todd Rima. "And to come through in that situation, I think Ross is going to get going now."

"That is exactly what he needed. An unbelievable clutch hit. A pretty great day. And a kid that deserves it. He's worked at it, so we're very happy for him."

Kirkwood raised its records to 23-4 overall and stayed comfortably in first place in the conference at 7-1. The Eagles have a good-hitting club, but they'd love to see Kramer make them even better.

"I definitely was not swinging the way I like to, but I'm hoping this will get me back on track," he said.

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The Eagles decimated Iowa Lakes with their 13-run outburst in the first inning of the opener. They scored four more runs in the second inning and won 17-0 in five innings.

Taylor Jackson was 3-for-3 and scored three runs in the first game. Cal Clark was 3-for-3 and scored twice. Spencer Wiskus ripped two doubles, drove in four runs and scored three times. Chili Moseley was 2-for-3 with two RBIs. Ellison Hanna had three RBIs and Korry Howell scored three times.

Cameron Neff pitched four shutout innings with six strikeouts for the victory in Game 1.

Izaya Fullard was 3-for-5 in the second game and ignited the big rally in the ninth inning with a lead-off double. Howell, Jackson and Hanna had two hits. Clark drove in two runs. Will Rodruck got the win in relief with good work in the top of the ninth after Iowa Lakes had scored three times to snap a 4-4 tie.

Iowa Lakes fell to 9-17 overall and 2-8 in the conference.

GAME 1

Iowa Lakes ▯ ▯ 000 00 - 0 2 4
Kirkwood ▯ ▯ (13)40 0x - 17 15 0

W - Neff.

GAME 2

Iowa Lakes ▯ ▯ 200 001 103 - 7 11 1
Kirkwood ▯ ▯ 200 011 005 - 9 13 3

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W - Rodruck.